ACCORDING TO HIS LIGHTS by WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN

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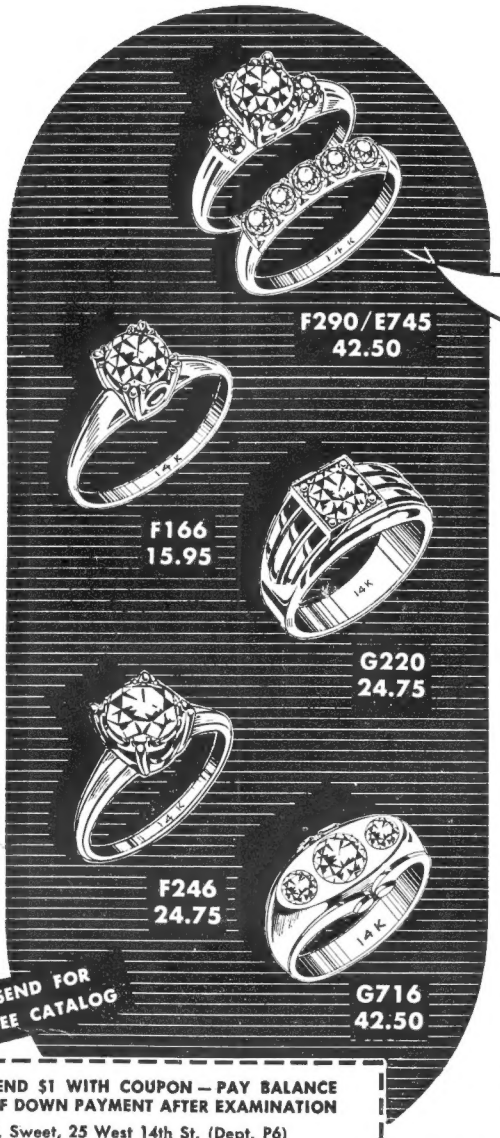

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Vol. 117, No. 5 for Best of New Stories

September, 1947

THE NOVELETTE

According to His Lights ..... WILLIAM CHAMBERLAIN 8

All the hundred-odd men in the battery hated Captain Quincy from the top of his unblocked campaign hat to the soles of his issue shoes. . . . That was fifteen years ago. . . . Today, standing among the ruins of Corregidor where the jungle has crept in to cover the blackened shell of the quarters we once all shared, as we suddenly saw the man come striding through the rubble that used to be the Rock, we hated him again—but had to admit he was the greatest soldier any of us had ever known.

SHORT STORIES

Deep-Water Decision ..... JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS 40

They'd fought each other to a standstill—Dawson and McKenna—in everything they'd done since schooldays. One didn't know how to quit—the other never would admit he'd had enough. Now—down in the underseas jungle where they dove for abalone—their twenty-year war had reached its climax, with victory clenched in the slashing jaws of a killer whale.

Hell and Holy Water ..... FRED GIPSON 52

Jay just wouldn't listen. It was one fool prank after another—and most always they worked out fine, too—like the time he hauled out his slingshot and dumped Ransome Bard in the prickly pear. But it all caught up with him the day the mules ran away and we near ended up in a watery grave down at the old baptizing hole. Jay's pop sure did frazzle his tail that time—what I mean!

Eskimo No Cry ..... HOWARD STEPHENSON 60

Being the official report of T. Keith, Master of Harbour at Fort Hill, District of Keewatin, Northwest Territories, on various negotiations concerning one Johnny Voici, trapper; one K. Dake, trader; one peterhead boat, to wit, the *Freezin' Fanny;* one semi-wild caribou, quondam pet of the U.S. Army during its recent reluctant occupation of that frigid zone; one game of red dog; $800 worth of peltries—and one generous helping of Arctic Circle justice.

Ashes to Ashes ..... C. P. DONNEL, Jr. 69

Want to get lucky? Amass the wealth of Croesus? Win the Sweepstakes? Marry the one girl? . . . . Just follow the recipe of Marty Geoghan of the County Donegal Bar—a pinch of dust, a bit of faith, and drink 'er down!

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OUT ON SEPTEMBER 10TH ◆ ◆ ◆

The Man Who Didn't Like Texas ..... CLIFTON ADAMS 102

Nobody ever dared ask Big Homer to cut short his fun when that toughest roustabout working the New Pecos oil boom unlimbered his hog-leg and cut loose. Nobody dared, that is, till the Bull Moose come along and fixed Homer's wagon. Moose was quite a hero till Shooter Haggerty asked him—just out of politeness—how he liked Texas, and he answered—(STOP! We can't print that. Some Texan may read these lines!)

A Pig for Mauna Loa ..... CARL J. KUNZ 110

It was a fight to the finish between Father Johan and the giant Hawaiian, David Lohio—Science *vs.* Superstition—with the souls of all the villagers at stake in the struggle. And none knew better than the good priest how formidable an antagonist he faced. Lohio even had the brazen effrontery, when he prophesied the eruption of Mauna Loa, to offer the *kahuna* a young pig "very cheap" to sacrifice to the fiery goddess Pele, and thus save his little church from the molten lava.

When Your Number's Up ..... EARL SUTTERFIELD 120

I was already an old tunnel rat when Curley Roberts came on the job as my helper. I never worried about the risk—I figured my number would come up when it was due and not before. But Curley didn't like working two miles in and two miles down and quit for a "safer" job driving a truck. I never expected to see the guy again but one not-so-fine day I did, thank God! Which is why I'm alive to tell this yarn.

1:54 and a Fraction ..... EUSTACE COCKRELL 126

Ben Brush Berigan was a bum, a tramp, a no-good, born bow-legged and bow-brained; his old man was killed in a crooked steeplechase and no woman ever loved him—but wait! Ben's life was not a total loss. For Ben loved horses with an undying love and he found El Suprema. He didn't have him long but before he lost him the little tout rode behind that perfect stallion in the fastest mile ever traveled by a trotter.

THE SERIAL

He Who Rides the Tiger (4th of 5 parts) ..... JAMES NORMAN 80

In which David Armour, American expert on Chinese treasure, still striving to regain his lost memory of the war years, acquires instead a beautiful but unwelcome Number Two Wife, visits Soochow and the Seven Piece Luck Restaurant in search of the past, learns more of the incredible machinations of Quinto—that best-damn caballero in all the Orient—and decides to leave post-war China to stew in her own broth of political cross and double-cross and start the long journey home.

THE FACT STORY

Escape to El Dorado ..... ALLISON W. BUNKLEY 72

Ever since Colonel H. P. Fawcett and his expedition vanished in Brazil's Matto Grosso back in 1924, strange tales have drifted out as to the eventual fate of that ill-starred party—tales of white men living with savages, of a "mysterious light" in the depths of the jungle, of the fabulous lost city of El Dorado. . . . And now, from England, a new expedition is setting forth with the most modern equipment (including a helicopter) to probe into the "Green Hell" and track down, once and for all, the "Fawcett Legend."

DEPARTMENTS

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Ask Adventure Experts ..... The men who furnish it 135

Lost Trails ..... Where old paths cross 142

The Trail Ahead ..... News of next month's issue 141

Cover painted for Adventure by Rafael DeSoto

Kenneth S. White, Editor

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

IT'S a crowded session this month, what with a round half-dozen recruits to the ranks of our Writers' Brigade to muster in, as many members of the Old Guard standing by to take the floor when the introductions are terminated, and a passel of vociferous reader-regulars anxious to get a word in edgewise before the blaze dies down. A good time, we think, to post ourselves off in the shadows while the rest of you hew it to the mark and let the chips—and sparks—fly wherever.

Newcomers first!

Here's Howard Stephenson, whose "Eskimo No Cry" you'll find on page 60—

Last summer I was knocking around the west coast of Hudson Bay when I met up with a bush pilot who had got a job paying off Indians at treaty-money time. I expressed surprise that Eskimos didn't come under the 200-year-old treaty. One thing led to another and he decided my education wouldn't be complete without visiting some Eskimo pals of his, so we did.

Don't let anybody oversell you on the dumbness of the Eskimo. You should see those lads take an inboard motor apart or overhaul a plane engine. They can read, too, but unless you want to print an edition of *Adventure* in Syllabic, their written language, I guess the youngster who is sort of the original of Johnny Voici in my yarn will have to wait for me to get back up there.

On my way home I ran into a trainload of tourists—honest, the Canadian National ran a big excursion all the way to Churchill—and it was through them I met the caribou. This shaggy old cow still hangs around that Yank airport which used to be such a big secret when we thought the krauts were coming over by that route. She gets lean pickings now—no more spam.

The tourists came up there bug-eyed, some with fur coats, though it's hot in summer, and expecting some wild beast to attack them any moment. They must have heard about a wild caribou. Anyway, a party rigged out by Abercrombie & Fitch went on a big hunt one day and darn near got close enough to kill this lone survivor of the Yank air strip.

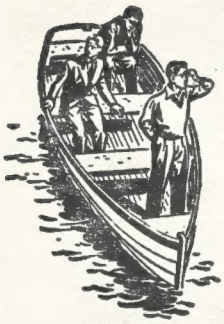
Well, I had an Eskimo and I had a caribou, so I put them together and I guess that's how you write fiction. I'm a fact writer myself, having turned out maybe a million and a half words for newspapers, books, magazines and radio. All strictly true, or at least so I believed when I wrote them.

It's a treat not to be hampered by facts which you might have to prove in court.

AND C. P. Donnel, Jr., *(we had the pleasure and privilege of buying and* publishing his first story when we were editing another magazine a few years ago), whose "Ashes to Ashes" appears on page 69—

I was born in Bala, Pa., and not long afterward became a resident of Norfolk, Va. Attended Norfolk public schools, lived at various

(Continued on page 137)



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ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK KRAMER

The wheels spun on the slippery rock, the truck hung poised for a moment— and then went over into the ravine.

By WILLIAM

A MAJOR in the Transportation Corps had found a launch for us and we left the Manila pier at about five o'clock in the morning. A steamy drizzle was falling and mist hung over the water as we threaded our way through the scores of transports and the dozens of hulks that dotted the bay. Then, finally,

ACCORDING TO HIS LIGHTS

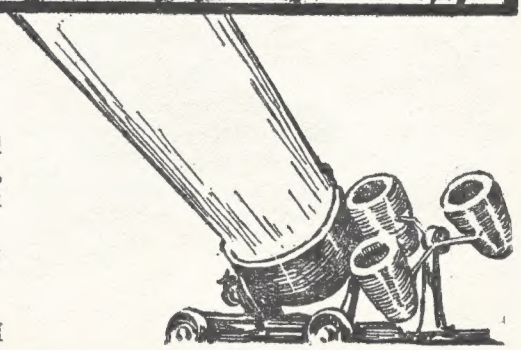
CHAMBERLAIN

the sun came up, burning the mist and the drizzle away and, about an hour later, we could make out the tip of the Rock punching itself above the horizon.

"Well, there it is," Stuart said, sucking on his pipe.

"Yes, there it is," I said.

It was nearly ten years now since I



had last seen Stuart Medary and a great deal of water had gone under the bridge during that time. I had not even known that he was in this part of the world until last night when, at headquarters in City Hall, I had turned around and there he had been, standing in the scarred corridor. He looked a little older and his hair was grayed at the temples but, other than that, there was little to mark him as a man who had spent the better part of three years in a Jap prison camp.

There was no particular reason why we should go back to Corregidor on this day. No reason other than that we had gone there together as brand-new second lieutenants some thirteen years before and we felt, I suppose, a certain nostalgia for good days that were gone and that would never come back. Stuart, of course, had gone back for a second tour of duty there in 1940 and had been captured there but this was the first time that I had been back since those halcyon days of the early Thirties.

The sun climbed higher as we chuffed along in the launch and presently we could see Caballo Island off to the left of the Rock and, farther away, what little there was left of the concrete battleship on El Fraile. We rounded Monkey Point three-quarters of an hour later and tied up at the ruined wharf and Stuart and I went ashore.

ONCE there had been warehouses and shops and a sawmill and a Filipino *barrio* down here at Bottomside but everything was gone now. Only the shell of the big powerplant remained crouched in its ravine while it looked across at the scarred side of Malinta Hill where a great slide of loose rocks marked one of the entrances to the tunnel. Everything else had been plowed into crater rubble by bombs and shells so that even remembered contours of the ground were no longer there.

Stuart said thoughtfully. "Remember how we used to ride the street car down to the Bottomside movie, Ben? It must have been just about here that Merry Steele fell off that night after the Howarth's party."

Standing there, looking at the raw side of the hill and the tangle of lush vegetation which had run wild over everything, I found myself wondering if this could be the same place, But, of course, it was.

The semblance of a road still wound up the hill to Topside and we took it, walking slowly for the sun was getting hot. At Middleside there was nothing left but the shells of the concrete barracks and a row of blackened foundations which marked where the officers' line had been. I had once lived in one of those houses but I couldn't find the place now because the jungle had moved back in and covered everything.

Topside was much the same.

The long line of barracks, blackened and roofless from fire and bombardment; the Cine; the headquarters building; the Post Exchange—all the same. Stuart and I tried to walk down Officers' Row along the path which had once looked out over the China Sea as it wound along to the Club and the golf course and the swimming pool. It was no use. There was no longer a path; just a succession of bomb craters twenty feet deep and covered by a green wall of jungle which could be penetrated only by chopping a path. A sweetish, vaguely offensive smell hung here—the smell of decay which clings to places, now going back to the earth, where people have once lived and laughed and worked and loved.

Sweat had soaked the khaki of our shirts and was running down the backs of our legs when we finally gave up and went back to the big building at the edge of the parade ground. Once it had been the Bachelor Officers' Mess.

It was less damaged than most of the other buildings and Stuart and I sat in the mottled shade on the broken veranda while we ate a couple of salt tablets and smoked a couple of cigarettes and tried to cool off a little. Just inside, beyond a wall that was no longer there, was a square and anciently familiar room with its floor deep in debris. I thought back to those nights when Jack Stern and Merry Steele and Seneca Drum and Texas Walter O'Mahan and Stuart and all of the rest of us sat in there and played poker and red dog and blackjack until the sky began to grow rosy in the east and the Filipino boy came with coffee, saying that it was time to change our whites for khaki.

Stuart sucked at his dead cigarette thoughtfully and then tossed it away. I imagined that I knew what he was thinking—thoughts the same as mine of Jack Stern who had been killed at Bastogne and Merry Steele who had died in Formosa and of all the rest, scattered now God only knew where. But I was wrong for, when he spoke, Stuart named a man of whom I had neither thought nor heard for eleven years.

"Do you remember Mathew Quincy, Ben?" Stuart asked.

"Yes," I said after a little. "Why, yes, I remember him."

I had detested Mathew Quincy—detested all of him from the top of his unblocked campaign hat, across his khakis which always seemed to be rumpled, and down to the soles of his issue shoes. And I wasn't the only one who detested him, either. All of the other hundred-odd men in the battery detested Captain Mathew Quincy just as much as I did—all, that is, except Stuart Medary.

Stuart hated him. Hated him with a bright, blue hatred which burned with a steady flame and kept Stuart awake, tossing and rolling, at nights sometimes.

MATHEW QUINCY came to the regiment in the fall of '32, I remember, just a couple of months after Stuart and I had come to the Rock fresh from West Point. Stuart and I had both been assigned to the same battery and I was in acting command, the former battery commander having gone back to the States sick a few days after we came.

Captain Quincy's transport docked in Manila on a Tuesday and I was Officer of the Day that day and couldn't go over to meet it. I sent Stuart in my stead for it was customary for each outfit to meet its new officers and bring them on over to the Rock—one of those old customs which made the Army such a pleasant place to be before the war.

The harbor boat was late in getting back that night and so it wasn't until the next morning at mess that I saw Stuart. I asked casually about the trip to Manila and guessed, from the expression on Stuart's face, that perhaps things hadn't gone entirely to his satisfaction.

"Meet him all right?" I asked.

Stuart nodded. He was a lean, red-headed youngster with a nice grin and a wicked sense of humor. He was an Army child, his father being a colonel in Washington, at the time, and his grandfather a retired general. Stuart and I had roomed together at West Point for four years and, on the transport coming over, we had played poker together in the Recreation Hall and dated the same girls and generally helled around the way new second lieutenants do.

"Yeah, I met him," Stuart said.

"Well?"

Stuart took his time about setting fire to a cigarette. "You remember that old gag about the soldier who saw the inscription on the tombstone that said, 'Here lies an officer and a gentleman,' Ben?" he asked finally. "And the soldier says, 'How come they buried them two guys in the same grave?' Well, that's about it."

"Not so good, eh?"

"Not so good. You'll find out for yourself."

I did. I got to the office a few minutes before seven-thirty, the usual time, the next morning. I went in through the first sergeant's office and Sergeant Mulholland got up to salute and return my good morning. His face looked worried but I thought nothing of that. Sergeant Mulholland was the old-maidish sort of person who was always worried.

"Captain Quincy is in the office, sir," he told me.

I thought that that was just a little odd. Newly arrived officers usually took two or three days to get themselves shaken down in their new quarters before they reported for duty and I had expected, as a matter of course, that Captain Quincy would follow the regular pattern. As I was to learn later Captain Quincy followed no pattern but his own.

He was sitting at my desk as I went in, thumbing through a pile of papers. In that first glimpse I saw that he was a man in his early forties, stockily built and in need of having his hair trimmed. His campaign hat looked as though it hadn't been blocked in a long while and it was yanked down on his head so that the brim bowed up over his ears at the sides and dipped steeply in front and back. That, combined with a faintly petulant

"Just out of West Point, too, eh? Well, no wonder this outfit is a mess."

look about his mouth, made him look remarkably like a horse, I thought.

I saluted and said, "Good morning, sir. Second Lieutenant Kennedy in acting command. Hope you had a pleasant trip over, sir."

He nodded without any particular enthusiasm, offered me his hand and then gestured toward a chair. "Sit down," he said.

He sat back in his own chair and started turning a pencil around and around in his thick fingers while he looked at me. I looked back. There was nothing that marked his face as being either good or bad—just a face. He wore horn-rimmed glasses and behind them his eyes were a greenish brown with the whites a little muddy. I guessed that his khaki uniform had been purchased in some sales store in San Francisco because it had the shiny, unlaundered look of new cloth and the folds were still in it from where it had lain on some Quartermaster's shelves.

The uniform matched that God-awful campaign hat, I thought. My own khaki had been made by the best Chino tailor down in the *barrio* and was starched and pressed to a board-like stiffness.

"Sorry that I wasn't able to meet you yesterday, sir," I began, but he stopped me with an abrupt lift of his hand.

"I'm a grown man, Kennedy," he said shortly. "I don't need to be met. And, from the looks of things around here, I'd say that you could have found something better for Medary to do yesterday instead of sending him off to play nursemaid to me in Peal boots."

I guess that I couldn't have been more shocked if he had come around the corner of the desk and planted one of his issue shoes in the seat of my pants. I could feel my face getting red and I was suddenly angrier than I had even been in my life.

"Sir," I said stiffly, "it's the custom in the regiment to—"

"Lieutenant," he said, "you'll find out in due time that I don't really give a damn what is customary and what is not customary. How long have you been in acting command here?"

"About two months, sir," I told him, my voice shaking a little as I tried to keep my temper.

Captain Quincy grunted. "Just out of West Point, too, eh? Well, no wonder this outfit is a mess." He raised his voice suddenly. "Sergeant Mulholland!"

SERGEANT MULHOLLAND came in pushing aside the little swinging door that separated the two offices. He was a slight man who had almost reached the retirement age. He was leaving the outfit soon, to go home—and it was a good thing he was, I thought now. I knew that he was pretty ineffectual but he was a nice old man and I had hated to do anything about it.

"Yes, sir," he said nervously.

Captain Quincy looked him up and down for a minute. Then he said, "I'll inspect the men in full field equipment in just fifteen minutes, Sergeant," he said. "Have them formed on the battery parade."

Sergeant Mulholland looked unhappy. "Sir," he said, "does the captain know that we are supposed to have infantry drill at eight o'clock? The training schedule—"

That was as far as he got. Captain Quincy banged the flat of his hand down on the desk so that the inkwell jumped and I thought for a moment that he was

going to climb right over the desk. His face was red and angry.

Sergeant Mulholland said, "Yes, sir!" hurriedly and tried to get back through the swinging door but Captain Quincy's voice stopped him.

"Come back here! I'll tell you when I'm ready for you to go!" His voice dropped back into a normal tone and there was a deceptive casualness about it. "Sergeant," he said, "my first sergeants and I always get along together—but they do the getting along. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," Sergeant Mulholland said.

"Just keep that in mind. At reveille this morning exactly thirty-seven men turned out—and they were the lousiest looking bunch of scarecrows that I ever saw. Where were the rest?"

Sergeant Mulholland said unhappily, "Sir, I don't. . . ."

Captain Quincy grinned unpleasantly and began rolling the pencil around between his fingers again. Sergeant Mulholland was beginning to sweat and I wondered uneasily if the captain was going to ask me that question. Officers weren't required to be present at reveille and it had never occurred to me to check up on how the men turned out.

"Exactly," Captain Quincy said. "And the reason that you don't was because you weren't there yourself. Well, tomorrow morning you be there, understand? And you see to it that every man is there and on time and properly dressed. You get it, Sergeant?"

Sergeant Mulholland hurriedly said, "Yes sir," and, at the wave of Captain Quincy's hand, went on back through the swinging door, almost knocking it down in his haste to get out of there. I didn't blame him. Because I was beginning to feel the same way.

"There's a weak sister for you," Captain Quincy said, half to me; half to himself. "And I didn't notice either you or Medary at reveille, either."

"No, sir," I said. I started to add that Post Regulations said that the Officer of the Day would take reveille for all of the batteries but I thought better of it and kept my mouth shut.

"You'll be there tomorrow," Captain Quincy said without any particular emphasis. "This outfit to me has all the marks of an old soldiers' home but it's not going to keep 'em."

Well, he was right about that.

I went on out to the porch of the barracks to see that the men were falling into ranks properly and Stuart Medary was just coming up the steps. He was one hell of a good looking soldier, Stuart was. Six feet and an inch tall and the rest of him built in proportion. There was a flair about him—something in the way that he carried himself or the cant to his hat or the way his saber hung—that made him look like a soldier. He grinned when he saw me—saluted with that easy lift of his hand, fingers cupped just the slightest bit.

"Morning, Ben," he said. "I stopped by the Post Exchange on the way down. I hear that the good Captain Quincy has already arrived. Quartermaster belt, policeman's leggings and all."

"Yes," Captain Quincy said, stepping out of the first sergeant's office. "I have arrived, Mister Medary. It's nice of you to favor us with your presence this morning—particularly after the hard day you had yesterday."

Stuart's face got brick red as he stood there at attention at the top of the steps. "I'm sorry, sir," he said. "I spoke out of turn."

Captain Quincy didn't say anything for a long moment; just stood there, looking more dumpy than ever in his unpressed khaki, while he stared at Stuart. I waited for the same wrath to break over Stuart's head that had put the fear of God into Sergeant Mulholland but it didn't come. Instead, Captain Quincy's voice was almost mild when he finally spoke.

"Medary," he said, "clothes don't necessarily make a soldier. Try to remember that—if you can."

He stumped on by the two of us—he had a sort of awkward, lurching gait which made you think that he was going to fall flat on his face with every step—and went down the steps to the battery parade. After a minute Stuart and I followed.

Sergeant Mulholland had fallen the men in now, and was calling the roll. When he had finished, he faced about tucking the roll into his belt, and saluted.

"All present or accounted for, sir," he said.

CAPTAIN QUINCY returned the salute with a sort of impatient wave of his hand and ran his eyes down the double rank of men in front of him. They were all watching him, I knew. The word had already gotten around through the mysterious grapevine which runs through an outfit that the new captain was a tough cookie and the men were waiting to see what would happen.

"How many men in ranks, Sergeant?"

"Eighty-one, sir," Sergeant Mulholland said promptly with just the faintest trace of satisfaction of a man who has anticipated a question and has the answer ready.

"And how many on the rolls, Sergeant?"

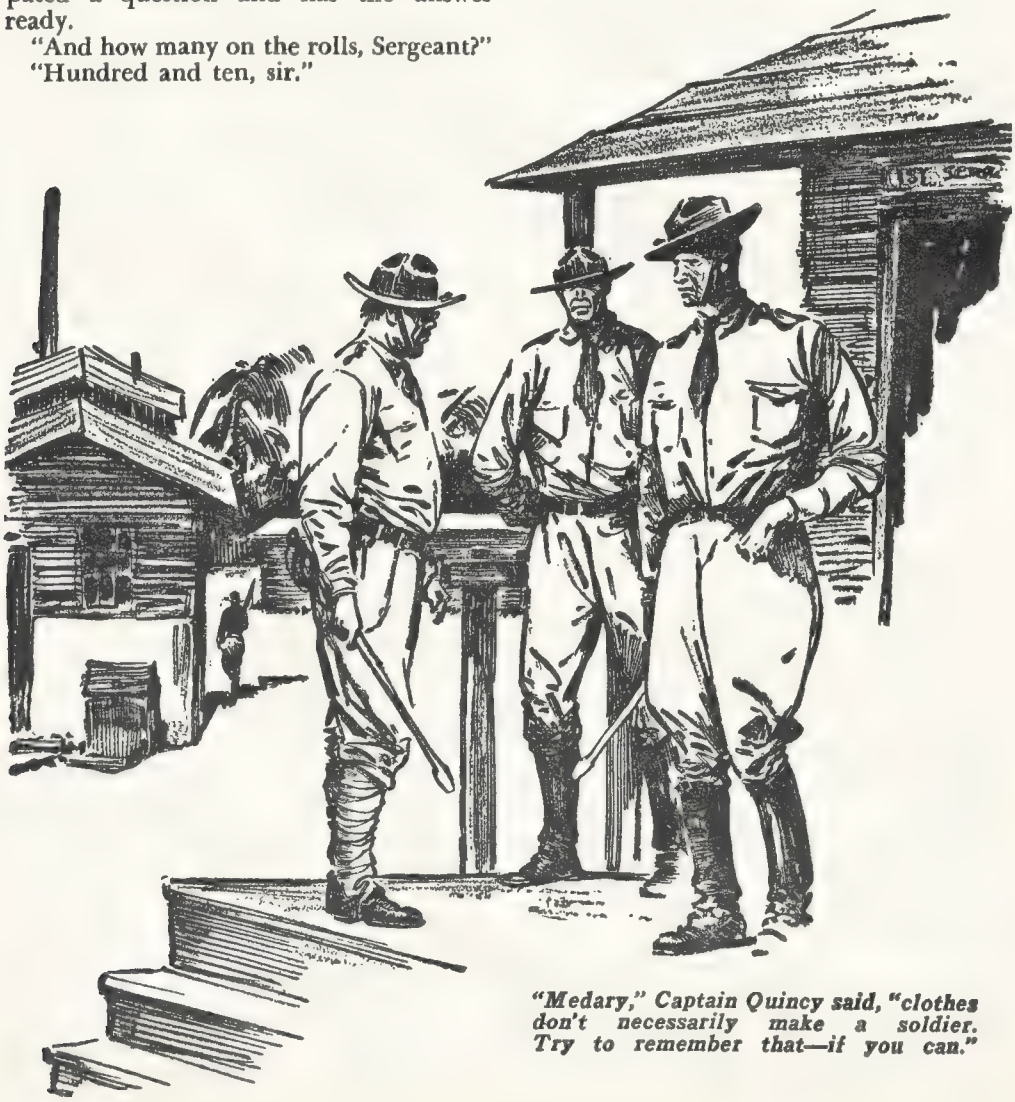
"Hundred and ten, sir."

"Yes," Captain Quincy said almost meditatively. "And I noticed that two were in the guardhouse and seven in hospital. Three more are away on special duty. Is that right, Sergeant?"

"Yes, sir."

"Twelve from a hundred and ten leaves ninety-eight, doesn't it, Sergeant?"

"Yes, sir," Sergeant Mulholland said and I could see that he was beginning to sweat again. In front of us the faces of the other men were wooden but their eyes were bright with interest.



"Medary," Captain Quincy said, "clothes don't necessarily make a soldier. Try to remember that—if you can."

"Then," Captain Quincy said, still in that mild, only vaguely interested voice, "where are the other seventeen men, Sergeant?"

"Sir," Sergeant Mulholland said, "there's the old guard detail—they don't usually turn out for formations the next morning, and there's Corporal White in the office, and the cooks—"

"Sergeant," Captain Quincy said, more sweetly still, "you thought that I was holding this inspection this morning just to kill a little time, I suppose. Or perhaps because I like inspections. Is that it?"

"No, sir," Sergeant Mulholland said. "The captain—"

"Hell's bells and little pothooks!" Captain Quincy yelled suddenly. "I told you I was going to inspect this battery this morning and I didn't mean just a part of it! Get those men out here! You understand? You get 'em quick, too!"

I have never seen a man move faster than Sergeant Mulholland moved. And I will swear that he was trying to salute with both hands as he went.

I've seen lots of inspections—been inspected myself and inspected others—but I've never seen an inspection more thorough than the one we had that morning. If there was any detail that Captain Quincy overlooked, I don't know what it was; and if there was anything at all that he found right, I don't know what that was, either. The sun was hot and, by the time we had reached the last squad, our uniforms were wet rags stuck to our backs and shoulders like fly paper.

Captain Quincy's remarks were not complimentary.

As we came to the last squad I saw Private Rajeski standing there with the corn-colored hair straggling down from under the edge of his campaign hat and his tie looking as though he had tried to hang himself with it. I thought, "Well, this ought to be the pay-off the way things have been going," and braced myself a little. Private Rajeski was a problem that Stuart and I had struggled with for the past two months but we never seemed to get anywhere.

He was a little, bottle-shouldered man and some recruiting sergeant back in Brooklyn should have been court-martialed for ever signing him up. There was nothing he could do that was right. He couldn't remember to shave in the mornings and he couldn't remember to shine his shoes. His uniform always looked as though he had slept in it and the way he did the manual of arms was enough to give you bad dreams at night.

It wasn't that he didn't try. I think that Rajeski probably wanted to be a soldier worse than any other man in the battery. Two or three times I had come upon him just standing, his mouth a little open and that yellow hair falling into his eyes, while he stared at Stuart—and I knew, somehow, that in his mind's eye Private Rajeski was imagining that that was the way *he* would look someday.

Captain Quincy stopped in front of him and waited for Rajeski to toss his rifle up and open the bolt for inspection but Rajeski didn't stir. He had seen Captain Quincy inspecting the other men and I guess that he was just too scared.

"Well," Captain Quincy barked, "what's the matter, soldier? Don't you know how to do inspection arms?"

Rajeski's lips moved but no sound came out and I stepped forward. "Sir," I said, "that's Private Rajeski, a recruit. I think he's just plain scared."

"Well, damn it!" Captain Quincy said irritably, "it's time that he got over being scared. Get that gun up there, soldier!"

Rajeski was shaking so that I could see it now. He tried to execute "Inspection Arms" and did just what I was sure he'd do—dropped the rifle. The next thing I knew he was swaying back and forth on his feet and Stuart jumped forward just in time to catch him. He had fainted dead away.

For a moment Captain Quincy stood there in the hot sun looking down at Rajeski; then he shrugged his thick shoulders. "Great God," he said, more or less to himself, "and that's the sort of thing that they send you to make into soldiers."

THE three of us, Captain Quincy, Stuart and myself, were back in the office just a little before twelve. Captain Quincy sat down behind his desk; motioned the two of us to seats. Stuart fidgeted a little in his chair and I saw that his mouth was tight and his eyes were hot and angry.

"Sir," he said, "those men were out

there, standing under that sun, for three hours! It's no wonder that Rajeski fainted! I almost fainted, myself! In my opinion it's inexcusable to treat men like that!"

Well, I thought, the fat is now in the fire for sure.

Captain Quincy picked the pencil from his desk and started turning it in his fingers again while he looked out of the window. The sun beat down steadily on the red roofs of Middleside and, beyond the roofs, there was the calm blue of the bay with the water breaking in a white line off the reef at Monkey Point. A steamer was coming out from Manila, a whisp of smoke hovering above her funnel and the Jap ensign hanging limply in the heat from the staff on her fantail. It was a scene of such absolute peace that it made Captain Quincy's next words seem all the more incongruous.

"Lieutenant," he asked absently, "have you the faintest idea of the fatigue and bodily discomfort that a man must endure in war?" Then he waved his hand with an abrupt gesture. "I'll start inspecting the heavy equipment at two o'clock," he said.

This was Wednesday and Wednesday afternoons were given over to athletics and recreation in the Army in those days. I happened to know that Stuart had a date with Nancy Howarth to go swimming that afternoon and I looked at him out of the corners of my eyes to see how he was taking this latest blow. Nancy was the most popular girl on the Rock then and you had to stand in line to get a date with her and I knew how much Stuart had been counting on this afternoon.

"This is Wednesday afternoon, sir," he said.

Captain Quincy simply shrugged his shoulders. "I know what day it is, Lieutenant," he said. "I will meet you at the searchlight sheds at two o'clock."

Stuart groaned as we walked together across the parade ground to the Bachelor Officers' Mess. "Damn him!" Stuart said through his teeth. "He's doing this to get even with me for that crack I made about

The crews were bunched around, talking in little groups and under their voices. There was none of the horseplay normally present.

his belt and leggings. So I'll mess around looking at searchlight trucks while somebody else takes Nancy swimming, will I?"

"Well," I said, "I don't know what you can do about it."

"I do," Stuart said, setting his lean jaw in a way that he had. "I know exactly what I'm going to do about it."

"What?"

"Go swimming this afternoon. Captain Mathew Quincy can just inspect his damned trucks by himself."

"Good Lord!" I said, shocked in spite of myself. "You can't do that, Stu! Listen, you didn't hear him work old Sergeant Mulholland over like I did. Man, he'd crucify you!"

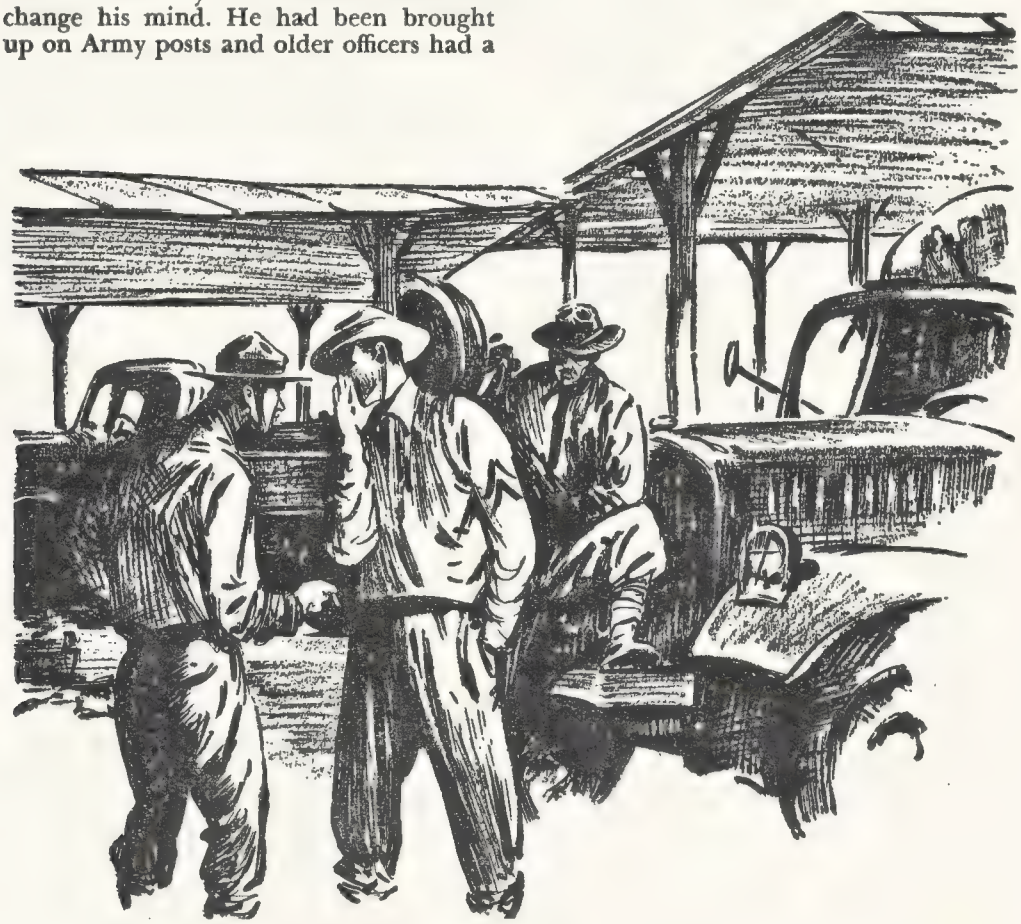
Stuart took off his campaign hat as we went up the steps to the mess and wiped the sweat off the band. His mouth was set stubbornly and I knew him well enough to know that there was nothing that I could say that would make him change his mind. He had been brought up on Army posts and older officers had a tendency to spoil him, I think. Anyway, Stuart could get away with things that none of the rest of us would dare try.

"You haven't forgotten who my date is, have you, Ben?" he asked, grinning a little now. "Which do you think would be worse—to have your battery commander mad at you or to have your colonel's daughter the same way?"

CHAPTER II

A. W. O. L.

THE crews were all at the searchlight sheds when I got there a few minutes before two o'clock. They didn't look very happy and were bunched around, talking in little groups and under their voices. There was none of the horseplay and



good-natured banter which were normally present. Captain Quincy came promptly at two, his rumpled khaki breeches bagging down over the tops of his leggings and that God-awful hat pulled down tight on his head.

He returned my salute and then stood in the sun for a moment looking at the men and the searchlights. "Lieutenant Kennedy," he asked absently, after a moment, "where's Medary?"

It was the question that I had been waiting for. I had been trying to think of some way that I could answer it but, of course, there was only one way. "He didn't come, sir," I said. "He had a previous engagement for this afternoon that he coudn't break."

Captain Quincy's head jerked around as though it had been pulled on a string. I could see sparks in his muddy eyes and his mouth was as thin and hard as the edge of a knife.

"God in Heaven!" he said hoarsely. "A soldier is absent from his duty because he has a previous engagement! Is this an afternoon tea party? What is the nature of this previous engagement, Mister Kennedy?"

"He's going swimming with Miss Howarth, I believe, sir," I said miserably.

"Ah," Captain Quincy said unpleasantly, "with the daughter of the regimental commander, eh? Mister Medary seems to be a politician. You go find him, Lieutenant, and tell him to report here at once. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," I said. I could see the men watching us curiously, wondering what was going on, as I turned back toward the road. I had taken only a couple of steps when Captain Quincy stopped me.

"You tell him," he said, "that if I should have occasion to send for him again I'll send a couple of enlisted men with rifles to bring him back under arrest."

Stuart had already left his quarters when I got back to Topside so I called the colonel's quarters and the houseboy told me that Stuart and Nancy had taken the street car down to the swimming beach at Bottomside. I caught the next car going down but I didn't enjoy the ride and I was feeling pretty low when I got off at the Bottomside station and walked on around the shoulder of Malinta Hill to where the swimming beach was tucked into a shallow cove.

The place was crowded—all of the younger crowd was there and they were whooping it up as usual. Jack Stern and Texas Walter O'Mahan were playing leapfrog with the Somers twins as I came up and they wanted to know what the devil I was doing in khaki on a lovely Wednesday afternoon but I put them off with some excuse or other. Finally I found Stuart and Nancy lying on the sand under a beach umbrella out near the point.

Nancy was nineteen then and just about the prettiest girl that I've ever seen. She had dark hair and a nose that tipped up a little and a cute, impudent way of grinning at you. She and Stuart were drinking cold pop out of bottles and Nancy saw me and waved as I came on across the sand toward them.

"Shame on you, Ben," she called out. "You're in improper uniform. Where's your swimming suit? And come on and have a bottle of pop," so that I knew that Stuart hadn't told her about Captain Mathew Quincy. He was propped on one elbow on the sand and his eyes were a little sullen as he looked up at me.

"I'm a working man today," I told Nancy, trying to keep my voice casual. She patted the sand beside her, inviting me to sit down, but I shook my head. "Mind if I steal your boy friend away for a minute, Nancy?"

"Secrets?" she wanted to know.

I gave her what I hoped was a noncommittal grin and said, "Secrets" while I jerked my head at Stuart. He didn't make any move to get up but just lay there looking at me with that reckless look in his eyes and I knew that this wasn't going to be good.

"I never keep secrets from my women, Ben," he drawled. "Go right ahead. What's on your mind?"

That made me a little angry because he knew well enough what was on my mind and this was bad enough, God knew, without dragging Nancy into it. Well, you asked for it, I thought pretty grimly, and said, "Captain Quincy wants to see you at once, Stu. He sent me to tell you."

Stuart didn't move and his eyes were sultry as he looked at me. "So you had to run and tell, did you, Ben?" he asked.

Stuart and I had had our quarrels in

the four years that we had known each other but I had never been so close to striking him as I was right then. It must have showed in my face because Nancy sat up suddenly with a bright, troubled look.

"What is it, Ben?" she asked softly.

I didn't answer her because I was looking at Stuart and feeling the sweat begin to run down my cheeks while I tried to keep my temper under control. I think that Stuart regretted what he had said the minute that it had passed his lips but he was stubborn and he wouldn't back down now.

"He asked me where you were," I said between my teeth. "I told him. He sent me here to get you. He said that if you didn't come he'd send two soldiers with rifles to bring you, under arrest."

I saw from his face that something of the enormity of the thing he had done was beginning to impress Stuart. He got to his own feet and began to brush the sand off his legs.

"I'm sorry, Ben," he said, glancing at me briefly. "You know that I didn't mean what I said." He turned to Nancy. "We've got a new battery commander," Stuart said. "He wanted to inspect searchlights this afternoon. I didn't. That's all there is to it."

Nancy didn't say anything. She just stood there and looked at Stuart—she was a colonel's daughter who had been brought up in the Army and she knew well enough what the score was. Stuart began to get red.

"Shucks," he said. "It doesn't mean anything. I'll go up. . . ."

"You'd better get dressed, Stuart," she said very quietly. "I'm sorry. I suppose I'm partly responsible for this."

She turned away and walked slowly across the sand to the bath houses. Stuart followed her after a little and I went on back toward the Bottomside station. I didn't want to talk with S art right now.

CAPTAIN QUINCY was busy inspecting the trucks and the searchlights when I got back to the park. He glanced at me, bobbed his head a little and went on with the inspection. We were almost through when Stuart Medary appeared. He walked up to Captain Quincy, saluted and I saw that his mouth was white around the corners.

"Lieutenant Medary reporting as ordered, sir."

Captain Quincy returned the salute and then stood there for a long minute with his legs spraddled a little and his hands behind his back while he looked at Stuart. I wondered with sort of sick feeling if he was going to give the latter a working over right there in front of the men. From what I had seen of Captain Mathew Quincy so far, I gathered that he was quite capable of doing just that.

The silence seemed to stretch out for an interminable length of time although I suppose that actually it was only a matter of seconds. Sun beat down into the truck park, blasting against the concrete standings, and the air was heavy and unpleasant with the smell of gasoline and lubricating oil and the creosote which was frying out of the sheds. I heard the street car go by on its way to Bottomside, its wheels clacking across the rail joints.

For God's sake, I thought, go on and get it over with!

There was an unpleasant little smile about Captain Quincy's mouth. "Ah," he said, "I'm glad to see that you were able to tear yourself away from your social engagements, Lieutenant. It was nice of you to come back and help us this afternoon."

Stuart didn't say anything but his face had gone completely white as he stood there with the sun sparkling on his polished boots. Some of the men who were the nearest could hear but their faces were wooden. I knew that Stuart was well liked in the battery.

"Or perhaps you think that swimming is more important than seeing that your equipment is in proper shape? Is that it, Lieutenant Medary? Come here!"

Captain Quincy whirled savagely and led the way to one of the searchlight trucks, parked a few feet away and with its hood open for inspection. Private Wingate, the driver, stood stiffly at attention but Captain Quincy waved him out of the way and thrust his head beneath the hood while he began to point rapidly with his finger. His voice rasped at Stuart and me.

"Look at that engine, gentlemen! Just look at it! Dirty—hog filthy dirty! Battery connections so corroded that they're liable to break any minute! Water pump leak-

ing—and rusty water, at that! Fan belt loose! Cracked spark plugs—three of 'em! A stuck valve! And you've got the confounded nerve to call this a truck! It's a junk heap! The whole damned lot of this battery's trucks are junk heaps!"

He jerked his head out from beneath the hood and stood there glaring at us for a moment. I didn't say anything—there didn't seem to be anything to say. Major Anderson, who commanded our battalion, had inspected the trucks just last Saturday and he had seemed to be pleased enough with the way they looked. They had just been painted and all of the chromium was well shined. I guess perhaps we hadn't paid an awful lot of attention to the motors but the motor sergeant had assured me that they were all in good shape.

At that, I didn't see that it was anything to get so upset about. If there were a few things wrong it wouldn't take long to right them—a little work tomorrow or the next day or next week when we could find the time. Searchlight practice was over and we weren't using the lights now anyway.

"Sir," I said, "there's no more searchlight drill scheduled until next month. We'll have everything in shape by then. You see, the battery's been pretty busy for the last two weeks building the new tennis courts and—"

Captain Quincy's face got almost apoplectic. "Great Judas!" he said and almost choked. "They've been building tennis courts, he tells me, and letting their equipment—*their equipment*—rust away into junk! Have you got the foggiest notion why you were given these searchlights in the first place, Lieutenant?"

"Yes, sir," I said stiffly.

"Then I'd be pleased to hear it. And tell me loud enough so that everybody can hear because it seems to me that you must be the only one around here that has got such a notion."

"To illuminate airplanes, sir," I told him.

"Whose airplanes? Ours? The ones that come over and fly around for target practice—which isn't scheduled again until next month?"

"No, sir," I told him: "Enemy airplanes."

Captain Quincy's head bobbed up and down so that the acorns on his hat cord bounced up and down against the brim of that God-awful looking campaign hat. He looked like a particularly disreputable battery mechanic as he stood there with his shirt soaked with sweat and grease splotches on his breeches where he had wiped his hands after digging into the trucks.

"Exactly!" he yelled at me. "Enemy airplanes and if they'd come over tonight just how long do you think that those lights would burn?" He jerked a hand savagely at the line of searchlights and trucks pulled out in front of the sheds. "There wouldn't be a confounded one of 'em with an arc lit a half hour after they had gone in action! And why? Because that truck engine failed or because those cable plugs were dirty or because that broken feed mechanism hadn't been repaired! That's why!"

I ALMOST had to smile at that because the thought of enemy airplanes coming over Corregidor tonight was so completely preposterous. I began to wonder if Captain Mathew Quincy wasn't just a little crazy. Farther on down the line I saw a couple of the men grin a little and then they straightened their faces again as they saw me looking at them.

"Sir," I began, "I scarcely think that it's likely that any *enemy* airplanes will—"

"Damn it, Lieutenant Kennedy," he stormed at me, "it's not your job to think whether it's likely or not and it's not my job to do it, either. It's our job to have these confounded lights ready to burn *all* the time! And that's just exactly what we're going to do!"

He swung around a little and took his attention off me to transfer it to Stuart. I was just as glad; I found that I was sweating and it wasn't just from the heat of the afternoon, either.

"And, Mister Medary," he said, "we're going to work at that job on half holidays and full holidays and Sundays and nights until it's done! And, if it cuts into any social careers, that's just going to be too damned bad! Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," Stuart said steadily. "I understand."

"Good! Then we'll get on with this lousy inspection!"

We finished at a quarter to five that afternoon and Captain Quincy told Ser-

I paid no particular attention until I heard them mention Captain Quincy's name and then I eavesdropped without shame.

geant Mulholland to march the men back to barracks. They went quietly, without the usual wisecracks and horseplay. I could imagine what the conversation would be tonight in the squad rooms and the mess hall. Captain Quincy turned to Stuart and me.

"You'd better eat at the battery mess tonight," he said shortly. "I want to start checking the property right after supper."

Then he nodded, returned our salutes and went stumping on off up the road with that peculiar lurching gait. I looked at Stuart, half expecting an outburst over the fact that we were to spend the evening checking property but none came. Instead, he was looking after the captain with a little smile and a funny light in his eyes.

"You damned petty little tyrant," he said without any particular emphasis. "You think that you're going to get away with this—but you're not."

There was one other thing that happened that evening that would have been significant had I only known.

When we got back to the barracks Stuart said that he wanted to phone—to Nancy, I guessed—and went on into the office while I kept on to the mess hall to tell Sergeant Forester to fix a place for Stuart and me to eat. When I had finished talking to Sergeant Forester I wandered on into the storeroom and was lighting a cigarette when I heard a couple of the men come into the kitchen.

They were talking loudly but I paid no particular attention to them until I heard them mention Captain Quincy's name and then I eavesdropped without shame. I recognized the voices as belonging to a

corporal named Jemsend and a sergeant named D'Arcy. The latter was one of the older line sergeants in the battery—a man with a crooked nose which slid across his face and sneaky eyes. I suspected that he loaned money to the other men at usurious rates of interest but I hadn't been able to catch him at it yet.

"Boy," Jemsend was saying, "it don't take no seventh son of a seventh son to see that this outfit is goin' to be tough from now on. This guy, Quincy, looks like hell on wheels to me, Mac."

Sergeant D'Arcy answered with a vivid but unprintable description of what he imagined Captain Mathew Quincy's antecedents to be.

"You're telling me," he agreed loudly. "Listen, I served on the same post with that guy back in the States four years ago. Half of his outfit had gone over the hill by the time he had been there six months."

"A hell of a chance a man's got of goin' over the hill out here," Corporal Jemsend said gloomily. "unless he wants to run off to one of them other islands and shack up with the gooks."

"Well, that bowlegged louse knows better than to try an' get gay with me." Sergeant D'Arcy said in a blustering voice. "He knows well enough what I know about him gettin' tried by court-martial back in the States."

"The hell you say," Corporal Jemsend said in an impressed voice. "He got tried, huh? What for, Mac?"

"Insubordination," D'Arcy said in a satisfied tone. "Some colonel told him to take his outfit and build a golf course on the post and old Quincy told him to go to hell. So they tried him. He'd be a major now if it hadn't been for that."

Someone else came into the kitchen then and I heard Sergeant Forester say, "Hey, pipe down, you guys," and I knew that he was making motions to indicate that I was in the storeroom because the voices stopped all of a sudden and then I heard the door slam. I sat on the edge of the table in the storeroom and fiinished my cigarette and wondered just what sort of a guy this Captain Mathew Quincy was, anyway.

I was just wasting my time—you could no more catalogue that man than you could catalogue a bad dream.

STUART and I didn't talk much as we ate our supper. It was a pretty sorry supper, at that—slum and fried potatoes that were soggy and canned peaches and heavy cake which was gooey with chocolate frosting. It was the first time that I had eaten in the battery mess and I determined that I would get after Sergeant Forester about it tomorrow.

Stuart was moody and preoccupied and I guessed that he was thinking over that scene down on the beach that afternoon. From the expression on his face I knew that his recollections were anything but pleasant. He stabbed his cigarette out in a saucer. "Well, I suppose that Simon Legree is probably waiting for us so that he can start counting blankets and mess stools. Who the devil do you suppose he's trying to impress, anyway?"

"I wouldn't know," I said.

I told Stuart, then, about the conversation that I had overheard between Jemsend and D'Arcy but Stuart just shook his head. "I think the guy is crazy, Ben," he said. "He hasn't been on the Rock twenty-four hours yet and already he's got everything in a mess. The sooner Colonel Howarth finds out about it, the better."

"Good Lord, Stu," I said, "you're not going to say anything to the colonel about this, are you?"

"I don't know," Stuart told me a little sullenly. "I might do just that—if it keeps on."

We left the mess hall together and walked on down the porch of barracks toward the storeroom. It was a swell evening, I remember. The sun was going down into the South China Sea with a splash of gold and crimson and great pillars of tinted cloud twisted and turned as they climbed up into the sky. A car from Bottomside went by filled with laughing people coming home from the beach and, farther along down the line of the barracks, someone was playing a guitar while a half dozen men sang "Roses of Picardy."

Captain Quincy was in the storeroom when we got there. It was nearly midnight before we finished.

The rest of that first week followed about the same pattern—only things got worse, if anything, as Captain Mathew Quincy really got his feet on the ground.

I'm afraid that Sergeant D'Arcy's belief in his immunity because of his knowledge of that old court-martial was not well-founded for Captain Quincy sent for him on Thursday afternoon. I was in the office at the time going over the council book.

Sergeant D'Arcy came in and saluted, his eyes shifting about uneasily. "Sir," he said, "the first sergeant told me to report to the captain."

"Yep," Captain Quincy said, sitting back in his chair and starting to roll that pencil between his fingers. "That I did. You've been loaning money again, haven't you, Sergeant?"

Sergeant D'Arcy looked startled and his eyes moved back and forth, touching everything except Captain Quincy's face. "No, sir," he protested. "The captain's wrong, sir. I ain't been loaning any money."

Captain Quincy smiled and I was quietly grateful that he wasn't smiling at me like that. "Save your breath, D'Arcy," he said. "They ran you out of Fort McClain for that and now you've started it up again over here."

"No, sir," Sergeant D'Arcy said stoutly. "I ain't—"

"Don't argue with me, damn it!" Captain Quincy said, leaning forward suddenly in his chair and pointing the pencil at Sergeant D'Arcy as though it was a pistol. "On the tenth of this month you loaned Private Rajeski four dollars and took a watch as security. He promised to pay you back five dollars on pay day! Well, you've got until reveille tomorrow morning to return that watch and any other things that you've taken from the men for security! You understand?"

"Yes, sir," D'Arcy mumbled.

"Good," Captain Quincy said, "and when you get back to your bunk you take a knife and cut off those stripes. You're Private D'Arcy in this outfit from now on. I'll give you some good advice besides. If you're smart you'll hunt yourself another home. I'm sort of partial to having nothing but soldiers in any outfit of mine and you don't fall into that classification."

D'Arcy's lower jaw dropped. "Sir," he began, "the captain can't—"

"Get out of here!" Captain Quincy said.

D'Arcy got. The next morning Captain Quincy busted two corporals—Jemsend for being absent from reveille and Sam White, the battery clerk, for general inefficiency. Sergeant Mulholland aged ten years in those four days. He was a nice old man but he was no first sergeant for Captain Quincy.

We were all just one big, happy madhouse by the time that Saturday evening rolled around.

CHAPTER III

THE HARD WAY

THERE was to be a reception at the Club that night for all of the new officers and their families who had come in on Tuesday's transport. There would be a dance afterwards and ordinarily I would have looked forward to a good time because Corregidor parties were pretty gay back in those days.

This Saturday, however. I was just plain all in and I would have given a little red calf to be able to go on up and hit my bed after dinner. Everyone was expected to attend, however, and so about eight o'clock I struggled into black trousers and a white mess jacket and wandered on out onto the second story veranda which ran across the front of the Bachelor Building. Jim Trumbo, who lived in the apartment next to mine, was already sitting out there with his feet up on the railing and a highball in his hand.

He said, "Hello, Ben. Come on and set. I'll buy you a drink."

I said that I could do with one because I was practically dead on the vine and didn't know whether or not I'd even last until nine o'clock which was the time that the reception was to begin. Jim yelled to Superiano, his houseboy, to bring another drink and kicked a chair around for me and I sat down.

It was pleasant out there on the veranda. The dusk was coming down softly so that it blotted Mariveles mountain slowly out over on Bataan; lights winked along the chores of Manila Bay and, down below us in the flower trees, cicadas sang cheerfully. Superiano brought me a drink in a tall, cold glass and I thanked him and put my feet up beside Jim's.

"Well, here's to a short life and a gay one, Ben," Jim said.

He was ten years older than I, a captain

now and regimental adjutant. I liked him a lot. He was a quiet sort who didn't go out much and I had an idea that he wasn't looking forward to this evening much more than I was.

We sipped at our drinks and Jim went on casually, "Sort of thought you'd be dragging some young lady to the hop tonight," he said casually after a little.

"Too tired," I told him. "I'll be doing well if I drag myself there and back again."

Jim didn't say anything for a minute and the two of us just sat there, smoking and looking out into the peace of the night. Some Navy ship was going through the channel, her signal lights winking out some message to our signal station at Topside. On the walk below us, a couple strolled slowly toward the Club with their low laughter making a pleasant sound against the background of the cicada chorus.

Then Jim said finally, "How do you like your new skipper, Ben?" and I thought that his voice was a shade too casual.

I was tempted to give him the usual noncommittal answer that one ordinarily gives to such questions—oh, he was O.K., I guessed. Had his little peculiarities that a person had to get used to—that sort of stuff. Then, suddenly, I thought to hell with that. Jim was an older man with ten years of Army service behind him. He had given me good advice before this and I could do with a little advice now.

"Jim," I said with my voice suddenly a little harsh, "I think that the man's crazy. If he isn't, he'll be the only one that's got his marbles left in that outfit if things keep on going the way they've been since Tuesday!"

Jim sipped at his drink and then put the glass carefully on the veranda rail. "Pretty bad, eh?"

"Worse than that," I said. "Mind if I tell you?"

"Go ahead."

So I told him of all of the things that had gone on and Jim listened, interrupting me only once when he called to Superiano to refill the glasses. I probably made it more dramatic than it actually was, but I was tired and confused and I had the vague, sinking feeling that all of this would end in tragedy somehow.

"Stu's the one that I'm really worried about," I said when I had finished the story. "You know what a good-humored kid he's always been—well, I haven't heard him laugh in two days and he's got a set to his mouth and a look in his eyes that I don't like. If Captain Quincy pushes him much harder I don't know what is liable to happen."

"I know," Jim said after a little. "Mathew Quincy's a hard man to understand. I served under him as a lieutenant for a couple of months not long after the war."

"Was he the same then?" I wanted to know.

"Just the same. I'll say this for the man, though, Ben. I learned more in that two months than I've learned in all of the rest of my service put together, I think." Jim paused for a moment to sip at his glass; then grinned a little wryly. "Learned it the hard way."

"Damn it!" I said. "The man's got no sense of proportion at all! Look at the way he's been driving the men on the trucks and lights! The whole battery worked up there at the truck park until eleven o'clock last night. Why, if there was any place that they could run away, half of the outfit would have deserted by now, Jim."

"Did the trucks and lights really need to be worked on?" Jim asked me gently.

"I suppose they did," I said a little hotly. "But what the devil is the urgency of it if they did? Why couldn't we have finished up next week? I'm willing to bet a month's pay that they were in no worse shape than the equipment in "A" Battery is right now. But you don't see Captain Fisher turning *that* outfit out to work half the night, do you?"

"A" BATTERY was the other searchlight battery in the regiment and Captain Fisher was supposed to be one of the best battery commanders on the Rock—in the whole Army, for that matter. He had won the Knox Trophy the year before. My temper wasn't soothed any, either, by the fact that Texas Walter O'Mahan, who was a lieutenant in "A" Battery had kidded me at dinner about the long hours that Stuart and I were working under the new regime.

"Ben," Jim said, "I guess I know pretty

much what you and Stu are up against and the only thing that I can tell you is to stiffen your backs and stick it out. Matt Quincy is a stinker—but maybe he's got reasons for it."

"I'd like to know what they are," I said bitterly.

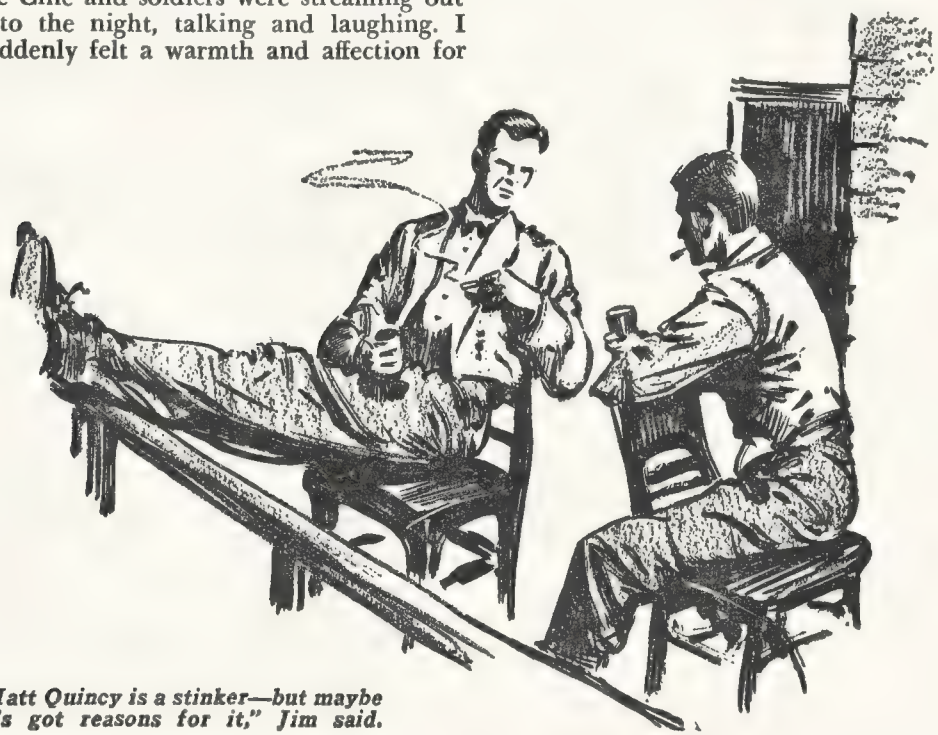
Jim stamped his cigarette out. "Matt Quincy was an enlisted man before the war," he said thoughtfully. "He got a temporary commission, like a lot of others did in 1917, in the infantry. His outfit got across early. They were shot up pretty badly at Soissons in the summer of 1918. Something went wrong—orders crossed up—something like that. Matt was wounded and still in the hospital when the war finally ended.

"Well, he managed to get a permanent commission after the war and he transferred to the artillery and came to Fort McClain where I first ran into him. He was known to be a driver and tough on the officers and enlisted men under him but that wasn't an uncommon trait in wartime officers."

He fished out a fresh cigarette and passed the case across to me. Over across the way the first show was letting out at the Cine and soldiers were streaming out into the night, talking and laughing. I suddenly felt a warmth and affection for all of this—the soldiers down there in the electric lights and the long line of the barracks stretching away in front and the faint clatter over by the guardhouse as they got ready to change reliefs. It was the Army and it was good and even the thought of Mathew Quincy couldn't spoil it for me. For a moment I was only vaguely aware that Jim was speaking again.

"Then he started spending all of his time with his outfit—he'd be there long before reveille and long after taps working like there was a devil after him. There was nothing that could be made perfect enough to suit him. Looking back on it now, I think that he adopted his battery as a substitute family in place of the real one he never had. Maybe I'm crazy but I think that he loved that outfit in a queer, twisted way and believed that the things he was doing was for its own good. Do you see what I mean?"

"Yes," I said slowly, "I see what you mean. But I'm worried about Stu, all the same. He's hot-headed as hell and I'm afraid he'll do some crazy thing that'll ruin his Army career . . . Look, Jim—



"Matt Quincy is a stinker—but maybe he's got reasons for it," Jim said.

why don't you transfer Stu to another outfit? That ought to solve everything."

Jim shook his head and pitched the end of his cigarette out into the darkness. Superiano shuffled out onto the veranda to say that it was a quarter to nine and time for us to be starting to the Club.

"I'd have to give the Old Man a reason, Ben, if I did that," Jim said. "You see, the Old Man likes Stu—likes you, too—and he's got the idea that the training you'll get under Matt Quincy is better than you'll get under anybody else."

I waited for him to go on.

"As a matter of fact, I have an idea the Old Man may have something to do with Quincy's presence here in the outfit." He paused for a long moment. "Matt Quincy was court-martialed a few years back, you know. Insubordination. He refused to use his men to build a golf course."

"I heard about that," I said.

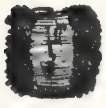
Jim smiled. "He was ably defended by a certain Major Howarth."

"Wait a minute," I said. "You don't mean—"

"Yes, I mean that," Jim told me quietly. "Our present C.O. He's the best friend Matt Quincy ever had—just about the only friend." He stood up. "No, Ben, we'd better let things stay the way they are—and hope for the best."

I grinned a little sourly. "O.K.," I said, "it'll be fun if any of us live through it."

"Come on," Jim said. "Let's wander on over to the Club."



WE WALKED along the graveled path in front of the Field Officers' Quarters, on down the long flight of stone steps which led to the golf course, and then turned right toward the Club. The main floor was shadowy with the light of Japanese lanterns and the orchestra was playing "The Monkeys Have No Tails in Zamboanga" from behind a screen of palms. The highballs that I had drunk combined with the music to give me a lift and I was suddenly glad that I had come. The receiving line was already beginning to form, I saw.

It was just another receiving line with all of the newcomers to the Rock standing there with the Commanding General and the regimental commanders. You went down the line, murmuring your name and shaking hands with people whose names you hadn't understood and smiling and saying, "Good evening," or "It's nice to see you," or any one of the other dozen trite things that one says when going down a receiving line.

I got to the end of it finally and wandered on out to the dim veranda which overlooked the golf course and the bay. There were a half dozen couples sitting at the tables there and Texas Walter O'Mahan called to me to join them. The Somers twins were there, noisy as ever—blonde kids dressed alike in long, flowing skirts of some sort of shimmery stuff—and Mary McQueston and Pat Day. Maybe two or three more.

"Don't tell me that Iron-hat McQuincy has let you and Stu off tonight for anything so frivolous and unmilitary as a hop," Tex said, holding up his hands. "Iron-hat must be slipping."

"Iron-hat was the nickname that Stuart had given Captain Quincy and it wasn't inappropriate but for some obscure reason it irked me a little to hear Tex use it now. Tex was a fat boy and, I think, the laziest man that I've ever seen.

"Whenever Captain Quincy starts slipping write me a letter about it, Tex," I said a little shortly.

Tex grinned at me. He had a hide like a rhinoceros and the man hadn't been born who could insult him. "I saw you boys working up at the truck park as I went swimming this afternoon," he said. "And do you know what I said to myself? I said, 'Tex, there but for the grace of God goes you. A grease monkey!' And you know, by the time I got to Bottomside, I was so tired I could hardly get off the street car just from thinking about it."

The rest laughed and I answered with something inconsequential and sat down. The talk swung away to the subject of a picnic that was being planned for tomorrow over at Fort Hughes on Caballo Island. . .

It was a good party but after a while the highballs I'd had with Jim started dying out and I felt tired and depressed all at once.

I was dancing with Nancy when a Major Moorshead, from Manila, cut in, and I was glad. I wandered on over to the bar and shook Jack Stern for a beer which I

didn't want. Captain Quincy was dancing with Pat Day, I saw, and he was grinning with a sort of silly, embarrassed grin. He was a good dancer, and that surprised me a little, I don't know why.

Jack Stern saw me watching and grinned. "Didn't know that your new skipper was such a playboy, Ben," he said. "From what I had heard he would be pretty much on the grim side."

"Forget it," I said a little shortly. What I said next surprised me; it wasn't that I liked Captain Mathew Quincy any better because I certainly didn't. It was just that I was getting tired of hearing people make those sly remarks. "He's all right."

Jack Stern gave me a startled look and then turned his attention back to his beer. Stuart was coming towards us across the floor, looking tall and slim and handsome in his white mess jacket. He made some casual remark about it being a stuffy party and leaned back against the bar as the music stopped. Then, without any warning, Captain Quincy came around the palm screen by the orchestra and stopped in front of us.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said smiling. "Dancing's hot work in this climate, I find. Will you join me in a beer?"

Jack Stern and I both said yes; then I looked at Stuart, suddenly conscious that he hadn't said anything. He was still lounging there against the bar but his face had gotten very red and I didn't like the look in his eyes. I wondered if he had been drinking heavily.

"Captain," he said slowly and very distinctly, "you can order me around the battery in the daytime but I'm damned if you can order me to drink with you at night."

He swung on his heel and left and I stood there not knowing what to do or say. Captain Quincy's face didn't tell us anything as he came on to the bar and ordered three beers.

"Your good health, gentlemen," he said.

I went home a little while after that. Somehow I didn't feel like dancing any longer.

CHAPTER IV

ESPRIT DE CORPS

THE next two months were a succession of days pretty much the same as the first four days had been—not worse, certainly not better. The other batteries in the regiment drilled fitfully during the mornings and, during the afternoons, went about the numberless small and unimportant chores which take the time of troops in peace. Most of their work usually was over by mid-afternoon and then the men were free to swim or fish or bowl or do anything else that it pleased them to do. But not our battery!

We painted the squad rooms, the kitchen, the mess hall, built new shelves, scrubbed web equipment, and we ran blow torches along the bed springs to kill the bedbugs.

Captain Quincy drilled us with a sort of savage intensity which overlooked no detail no matter how small. Over and over and over again under the blistering sun and long after the other outfits had gone on in. And in the afternoons we scoured the searchlights and the trucks until you could eat a meal off them any place and we repaired and adjusted them until they were as near perfect as pieces of mechanism could be. We painted the squad rooms and we painted the kitchen and the mess hall and we built new shelves in the storeroom. We scrubbed the web equipment and re-stenciled it and we ran blow torches along the bed springs to kill the bedbugs.

Sergeant Forester served slum and soggy potatoes and canned peaches once too often in the mess and lost his stripes. Captain Quincy made a little private first class, named Willie Bernstein, mess sergeant and ordered me to eat at least one meal a day in the mess and see that it improved. The food got better and I felt a little thrill of pride one day in the Post Exchange when I heard Private Flynn of the second platoon boasting to a soldier from another battery about the quality of the chow in our mess.

When the day was over and the men from the other batteries were going to the Cine or playing cards in the day room or lying about on their bunks and talking we were out with the lights. Our allowance of tactical gasoline wasn't large enough to permit us to burn them much but we went out just the same and simulated action.

"Our job has to be carried on during darkness," Captain Quincy said. "It's easy enough to splice a broken cable or repair a feed mechanism when you've got daylight to do it in. We won't have daylight and so we'll learn to do it in the dark."

And learn we did. Captain Quincy and Hobbs, the electrician sergeant, would suddenly come up to a light positon in the dark; fumble with the light or the comparator or the power plant.

"O.K.," Captain Quincy would say to the light commander. "You're out of action. Find the trouble and fix it, son."

At first it sometimes took hours but, by the end of two months, the men had gotten so that they would have the lights back in action in a matter of minutes. Stripes fell like autumn leaves during that two months; a noncom either produced for Captain Quincy or he ceased to be a noncom. And I had to admit that the new ones he picked were good—kids, most of them, but smart and ambitious and full of drive.

When a rainy night came along the other batteries sat snug in barracks listening to the storm slap at the windows, but not us. We were out on the slippery, winding roads with our searchlights and trucks—going into position, going out of position, laying communications, shouldering stalled vehicles out of mud holes, dripping, swearing, damning the day that we had even seen Captain Mathew Quincy.

But learning, always learning.

As the days followed one another during that two months I became vaguely aware that a change was taking place in the battery among the men. It was an intangible thing that you could scarcely put your finger on but it seemed to me that they were developing a sort of mental toughness which hadn't been there before Captain Quincy came. It was as though they felt that they had experienced the worst that could happen to them already and that anything else that came along now would be in the nature of an anti-climax.

I noticed that most of them had taken to walking with a little swagger when they went to the Cine on those rare occasions when Captain Quincy didn't have them doing something else. And men from the other batteries usually gave them the sidewalk—they were pretty apt to get pushed into the gutter, if they didn't.

OF ALL of them, I guess that Private First Class Rajeski (Captain Quincy had promoted him) was the most surprising. Captain Quincy had taken Rajeski under his wing, in his own peculiar way, ever since that first day when Rajeski had fainted out on the battery parade. The captain had ridden Rajeski unmercifully at first, jumping on him for even the smallest things, but he had praised him, as well, and somewhere down in the man's timid, starved soul he had found a spark of pride. Captain Quincy had fanned it

with small things—a word of praise for a well-cleaned rifle or a well-made bunk—and it had finally blossomed into full flame on the day that Rajeski had been made a first class private and assigned as a driver of one of the searchlight trucks.

The real pay-off, though, was when Captain Fisher, who commanded the other searchlight battery, came to the office one morning. He was a tall, thin officer—every inch a gentleman—but his face was flushed and a little angry as he came in.

"Captain Quincy," he said stiffly, "your men are getting out of hand. I think that you'd better do something about it."

Captain Quincy showed neither surprise nor concern as he leaned back in his chair and began to roll that pencil between his fingers. "What's the trouble, Fisher?" he asked in a deceptively mild voice.

"One of them beat up my battery mechanic this morning," Captain Fisher said grimly. "I've had to send him to the hospital with a broken nose. One of my corporals tried to separate them and he got a black eye."

"Who did it?"

"One of your men by the name of Rajeski," Captain Fisher said. "Either you do something about it or I will."

"I'll take care of it," Captain Quincy said. "Much obliged for telling me, Fred."

After Captain Fisher had gone, the skipper grinned a little to himseld and rolled the pencil between his fingers some more. "I'd like to know what the fight was about," he said thoughtfully.

"I can tell you, sir," I said grinning a little myself. "The man from "A" Battery said that Rajeski's truck was dirty and then Rajeski hit him."

Captain Quincy didn't say anything for a long minute but just sat there looking thoughtfully out of the window. Then finally he placed the pencil back in the center of the desk and there was an odd, faintly proud smile about the corners of his mouth.

"The little man has found himself, Kennedy," he said. "I don't think that we need worry about him any more. Put his name down on the list for promotion to corporal when the time comes."

"Are you going to punish him, sir?"

"For what?"

"For fighting, sir."

"Hell's bells and little pothooks!" Captain Quincy yelled at me. "What the devil does a man come into the Army for, anyway? If Fisher's men can't take care of themselves *I'm* certainly not going to act as nursemaid for 'em!"

It was about a week later that I got to see still another facet to Captain Quincy's character. He and I were just leaving the barracks to go to the truck park when Major Anderson, the battalion commander, came by. Major Anderson was a short, stoutish man who had transferred from the cavalry not so long ago and he affected a riding crop and cavalry boots together with a rather pompous manner which rubbed you the wrong way.

"Good morning, Captain," he said to Captain Quincy frowning a little as he looked around. "Just passing by and I though that I'd look in and see how things are going."

"Help yourself," Captain Quincy said. "Lieutenant Kennedy and I are on our way to the truck park."

His tone was respectful enough but just a trifle impatient. I knew that the captain didn't have too high an opinion of Major Anderson ever since the latter had mistaken a fuel pump for a carburetor when he was inspecting the trucks a couple of weeks ago. Now he implied that the major could look around if he wanted to but that he wasn't going to waste Captain Quincy's time in doing it. The major got the implication all right and his face turned a little red.

"Ah," he said, "I noticed that your garbage cans weren't lined up very neatly this morning, Captain. Spoils the appearance of the back line."

"Yes, sir," Captain Quincy said briefly. "Anything else, Major?"

MAJOR ANDERSON clasped his riding crop behind his back with both hands and rocked back and forth on the balls of his feet. "Yes," he said. "As a matter of fact, there is. I notice that over in the first battalion all of the batteries have flower boxes along the verandas of their barracks. Makes a nice appearance. Wish you'd go down there and take a look at them—then fix your barracks up the same way. Don't want the first battalion to get ahead of us, you know."

Captain Quincy put his hands on his hips and bobbed his head up and down so that the acorns on his hat cord jumped. His voice was as mean and sarcastic as I had ever heard it to be.

"Major," he said, "I'm working my men twelve—fourteen—sixteen hours a day trying to get this outfit in shape to do the job that some day it's going to have to do! Are you suggesting that I stop that work and start to plant window boxes?"

Major Anderson's face got redder than ever. I could see that he was trying to thing of something to say but apparently he couldn't because he wheeled suddenly and started back for the road. Corporal Whistler was turning into the battery area and the major almost ran into him. I guess that it startled Whistler because he passed on by without saluting and then Major Anderson's voice cut out at him like a whiplash.

"You man!" he bawled. "Come back here! Don't you know enough to salute an officer when you see one?"

Corporal Whistler was one of the most military men in the battery and his face was a study as he turned and walked back to where Major Anderson was standing. The major was mad at Captain Quincy and he certainly started taking it out on poor Corporal Whistler—but not for long. It took the captain just about three jumps to get over there and he shoved in between Corporal Whistler and the major. I had never seen him so angry.

"Major," he said, "whenever any of my men need disciplining *I'll* do it! Do you understand? Neither you nor anybody else is going to lay a hand on them. Now, if you've got any thing to say you can say it to me—sir!"

I told Jim Trumbo about the incident that night and Jim shook his head. "I'm not surprised," Jim said. "He's like that. He'll bedevil and browbeat his men beyond all undertsanding but let anybody else so much as look cross-eyed at 'em and he's like an old she-bear with cubs. I'm afraid that trouble is going to come from this, Ben."

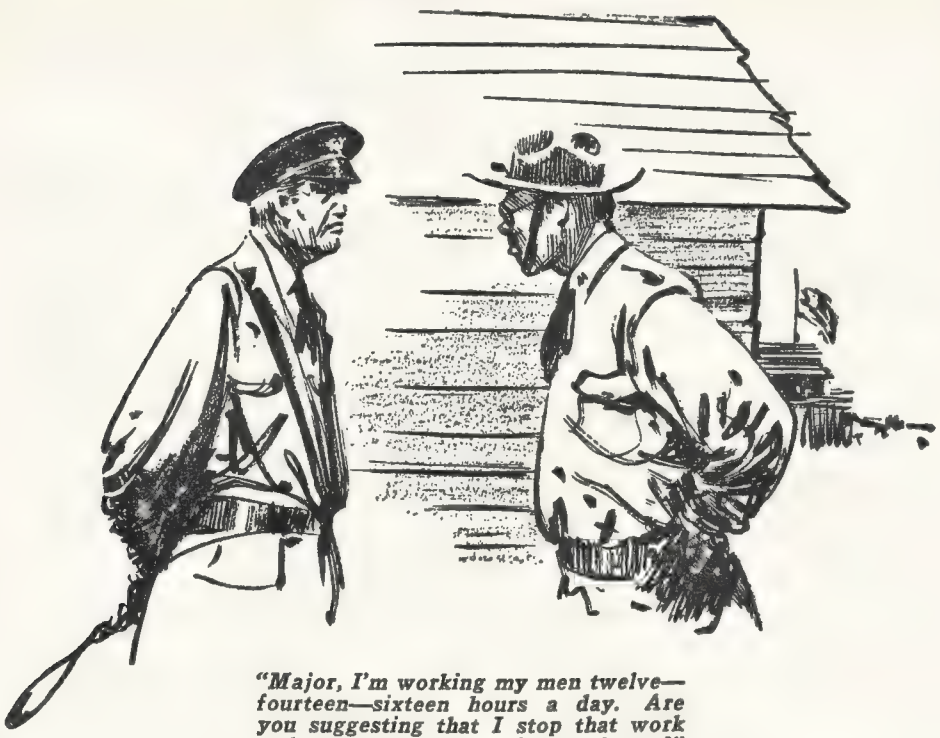
"Major Anderson?" I asked.

Jim nodded. "Among others. There have been people coming to the Old Man with complaints," he said cryptically. "He's waved them away but there's an inspector due here from Washington soon."

I was almost afraid to ask the question but I had to, somehow. "Is Stu one of those who've been coming to the Old Man, Jim?"

Jim shook his head and I felt good all at once but what he said next disturbed me more than I cared to admit. It wasn't that I had grown to like Captain Quincy any better during the past two months. I hadn't. I detested him cordially and if I could have gotten out of his battery I would have been the happiest second lieutenant in the Army. Nevertheless, I had learned to respect him and to see just a little of the thing which seemed to drive him to do the things that he did. I didn't want to see him stabbed in the back.

On the surface there was nothing wrong between Stuart and Captain Quincy. If the latter had resented Stuart's rudeness



"Major, I'm working my men twelve—fourteen—sixteen hours a day. Are you suggesting that I stop that work and start to plant window boxes?"

at the Club that night he hadn't showed it as far as I could see. He treated both Stuart and me just alike—which was to work the pants off us and give us hell whenever we tied something up. Stuart had buckled down to it, too. He worked harder than any of the soldiers did and the hours that he put in at the battery were longer, if possible, than those of Captain Quincy. Underneath, though, I knew that he was burning up and that the time was coming eventually when he would blow his top.

I had passed up the hop on this Saturday night and was sitting out on the second-story veranda in an undershirt and an old pair of trousers. We had been working on the lights all day—on Monday we were to go across to Bataan for a month of extended field exercises—and I was dead tired. Presently Stuart came along the veranda and joined me.

"Not going to the hop?" I asked.

"No," he said. He lighted a cigarette and, as the light of the match flared across his face, I noticed how lean and thin it had become. We sat and smoked in silence for a few minutes while we listened to the cicadas. Someone was playing a Victrola in the Wheeler's quarters next door—a Hawaiian song—and the music was soft and fine against the night.

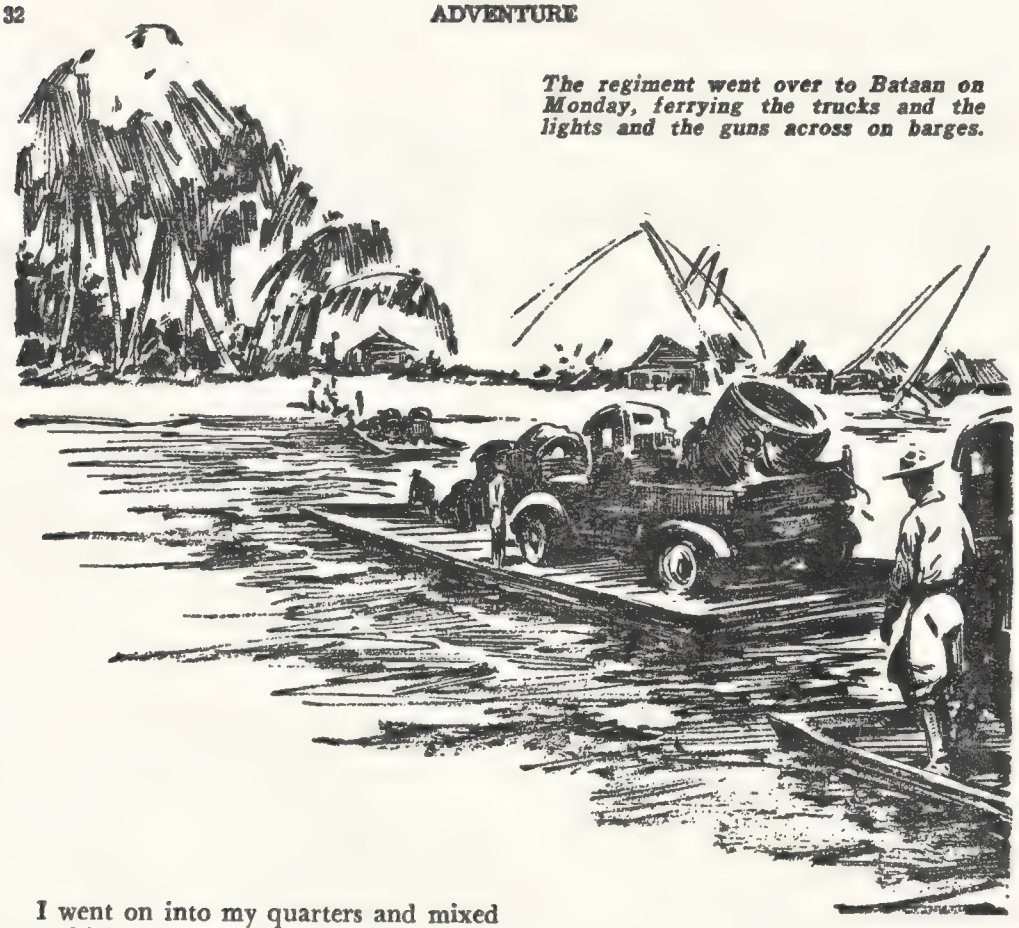
Suddenly, Stuart dropped his cigarette to the concrete floor and then smashed his foot down on it as he jerked himself up out of his chair and started to pace up and down the veranda. There was a quick jerkiness to his movements that I didn't like and his voice had a strained and unnatural quality that I liked even less.

"Ben," he said, "have you ever wanted to kill anybody?"

"No!" I said sharply. "For God's sake, get hold of yourself, man! You're talking like a lunatic."

"Have you ever waked up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat and laid there just thinking to yourself how it would feel to get your fingers around a man's throat? Well, that's what I do, Ben!"

"Sit down, you fool!" I said. You've got yourself all worked up about nothing. I'll be back in a minute."



The regiment went over to Bataan on Monday, ferrying the trucks and the lights and the guns across on barges.

I went on into my quarters and mixed two highballs—good, stiff ones—and carried them back out to the veranda. Stuart was sitting in his chair once more.

"Here," I said, pushing one of the glasses into his hand. "Get yourself around that and then go get yourself some sleep. You'll feel silly about this tomorrow."

Stuart said, "Thanks," and gulped half of his highball. Then he went on more quietly. "Sorry, Ben, but I guess you know well enough how I feel about that bird with the acorns flopping up and down on his hat and that nasty, sarcastic voice of his and his senseless drive, drive, drive."

"Take it easy, Stu," I said quietly.

"To hell with that! I'm going to get him, Ben. I don't know how but one of these days he's going to go too far and then I'm going to get him."

The quiet, almost monotonous tone that Stuart used when he said that bothered me more than his wild talk of a minute before had done.

CHAPTER V

SALUTE TO A SOLDIER

THE regiment went over to Bataan on Monday, ferrying the trucks and the lights and the guns across on barges. It was ten o'clock in the morning when we got the last of our equipment unloaded and formed up on the dusty road. We marched in a single column for some fifteen miles and then Captain Quincy pulled the headquarters detachment off into a little side road which led to the battery C.P. positions and Stuart and I took our searchlight platoons on forward to the positions that had already been reconnoitered.

For the first time in two months I really began to enjoy myself again. I was

at the head of the column with Corporal Whistler in the battered old GMC which we used as a wire truck. Behind us the searchlight trucks lurched along, their canvas covers brown with the dust that boiled up in the quiet, windless air and their sound locators jouncing along behind like clumsy bugs. The sun filtered through the jungle roof and made a bright and intricate pattern across the road and I though that things could be pretty good, after all.

After a half hour I saw Stuart lead his platoon out of the column and off on a faint track to the left toward where his platoon C.P. would be and I kept on. A

few miles farther on I found the mouth of the little ravine that I had selected for my own C.P. and we swung off the road and bounced along under the trees for a couple of hundred yards to where the ravine widened. There was room for all of the trucks here and a little knoll, fifty yards up the ravine, provided a good place from which the lights could be directed at night.

We ate chow—sandwiches and cold beans—and then I started a party to laying wire back to the second platoon and the battery C. P. and took my light commanders on forward to the light positions that I had selected. It was tough going. Most of the light positions were on rocky shoulders which thrust up far enough above the jungle to afford a good field of illumination and they were hard and dangerous to get to. The worst of them all was that of Number Five light. To get to the position we had to crawl along a narrow hogback for some five hundred yards with a steep drop of a hundred feet or more on either side.

We had brought the searchlights trucks with us because I wanted to see just how they would make out in getting into position. Private Rajeski was driving Number Five and I'll admit that I didn't feel too happy as I climbed into the cab with him and Sergeant McComb and told him to take her up the hogbacks. "Think you can do it, Rajeski?" I asked.

"Sure, Lieutenant," he said. "This old girl will go any place. Put some climbers on her an' she'll go right up a telephone pole."

He meshed the gears and put the truck at the slope and we went on up with the engine growling. There was a tricky turn at the top just before we hit the hogback but Rajeski just grinned and took us around it and then we were crawling along a way so narrow that you could look out of the cab window and see nothing but a nasty drop below. I was sweating more than the heat of the afternoon called for when we finally lurched across the final few yards and into the little clearing where the light position was.

I said, "Nice going, soldier," and Rajeski grinned at me again, pushing his straw-colored hair out of his eyes.

"Shucks, Lieutenant," he said, "I could drive that blindfolded."

Just the same, I didn't enjoy the return trip any better and I decided that, if we had any wet weather, Number Five light would stay in position instead of being pulled back to the platoon C.P. as I had planned for the rest of the lights.

It was mid-afternoon when we got back to the C.P. The men had their shelter tents pitched under the trees and the kitchen was set up and the latrines dug. I told the light commanders to take their sections and start laying field wire to their searchlight positions and then took the GMC and headed back down the road to where the second platoon was. Stuart was there and he came out to meet me as as he heard the GMC come rattling in.

"How are you making out?" I asked.

"O.K.," he said. "The men have made themselves pretty comfortable. I'm letting them take it easy for the rest of the day."

"How about your wire?" I asked, a little worried.

Stuart shrugged his shoulders. "Nuts," he said. "The exercises don't start until Wednesday and we've got all day tomorrow to lay wire. The men have been up since three this morning."

I DIDN'T like it but, after all, I was just another lieutenant in the battery and it wasn't up to me to tell Stuart what he ought to do or what he ought not. Then I heard a truck coming on down the road and I had a hunch that that would be Captain Quincy. I wasn't wrong. He climbed out and came across toward where we were standing. As usual, his khaki was soaked with sweat and yellow dust had painted his face with a futuristic pattern. His eyes swung swiftly about through the trees and I knew that he hadn't missed the fact that most of the men were there, sprawled out in the shade.

"You've got your men bedded down, Medary?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Stuart told him.

"Have you laid the field wire to your light positions yet?"

"No, sir," Stuart said, giving him the same answer that he had given me. "The exercise doesn't start until Wednesday and the men are tired. I'm letting them take it easy for the rest of the day."

I expected, of course, that Captain Quincy would tear Stuart's head off right then and there but he didn't. For some reason he looked older and more tired this afternoon than I had ever seen him look before and I wondered if he knew about those wheels within wheels which Jim had told me were beginning to grind.

"Stuart," he said and it was the first time that I had ever heard him use Stu's given name, "I want to tell you something. There was an infantry company once that didn't lay its wire one night because the men were tired and the officers thought that there would be plenty of time the next day. The enemy wasn't close, you see, and nobody had ever taught those men that in war you can't leave even little things until tomorrow. That night the Boche came and the company was cut off and a lot of those men died unnecessarily."

"This isn't war," Stuart said a little sullenly. "It's nothing but a field exercise. Everybody else seems to understand that, sir, except you."

"The things that I am talking about have got to be learned in time of peace," Captain Quincy said. "When war comes it's likely to be too late. Get your wire parties out, Lieutenant. I want the communications in before anybody sleeps tonight."

Well, the communications were in all right. It was four o'clock the next morning when the last of my wire parties came in, soggy and leaden with fatigue.

That start was a pretty good indication of what the rest of the exercises would be like, at least insofar as our battery was concerned. By the end of the first ten days I didn't suppose that it was possible for men to become as tired as we were and still keep on going. I got so that I could sleep, sitting upright in the GMC with an arm hooked around a cab post while we jolted over the roads, or I could sleep standing up and leaning against a tree.

Each night, just before dusk, the crews loaded into the searchlight trucks and jolted out of the concealed bivouac in the ravine to go on out to the light positions. And each morning, in the soggy dawn after the sky had grayed enough so that the lights would no longer be effective, they jolted back in. Most of the time the crews would have been up all night for we were on a constant alert but there would be no sleep for them yet. First breakfast; then back at the lights and the trucks, cleaning adjusting, repairing until each piece of equipment was as perfect as it could be made—and so that the lights would burn steadily again tonight. Sleep could come later—if there was time.

Because the lights must burn! That was the thing that Captain Quincy hammered at us over and over and over again. Always, the lights must burn!

And they did burn. The lights in Captain Fisher's battery, over in the other half of the defensive sector, might be out of action when the planes from Clark Field came over in a simulated attack but ours never were. They were always there from dark until dawn—long slender white fingers feeling their way across the sky. I couldn't help feeling proud.

I saw Stuart seldom during those days although I talked with him now and then over the field line—brief conversations restricted to essentials. Captain Quincy I saw often. At least once a day he would come lurching across the bivouac area to inspect the lights or the trucks and at night his bulky shape would materialize out of the darkness as we sat on our hill tops listening for planes. I don't know when he slept or even if he did. That preoccupation, which I had noticed the first day, was still on him but not to the extent to where he would overlook a missing screw in a lamp feed mechanism or a dirty carbon holder.

It began to rain as we went into the last week of the exercise—a nasty, chilling rain which was steady enough to turn the roads into quagmires and keep us wet all of the time but not so steady that we could be sure that no planes would come over. At some time or other during the night the clouds would always break for a little while and the Air Corps people at Clark Field loved to try and slip in on us then. We only had a few more days to go, though, and then we would be back to dry barracks and dry beds.

ON THURSDAY Captain Quincy sent word that he wanted to see Stuart and me at his C.P. that afternoon and so, at a little after two, I started out with Corporal Whistler and the GMC.

We picked Stuart up at the crossroads and then went on in. Stuart didn't have much to say as we spattered along through the rain. There was a long rent in his khaki breeches where the skin showed through and his campaign hat was battered and sodden and his boots were lumps of mud. I guess I didn't look any better but I had to grin anyway.

"You don't look much like 'Beau' Medary now," I said, referring to a nickname he had once had at West Point. "You look like something that's been fished out of the old mill pond."

Stuart didn't smile back. He had lost weight, I saw, and his eyes were unnaturally bright. I wondered if he might not have a touch of malaria but he said that he didn't.

The GMC crawled through a hundred yards of yellow mud and then labored up a slick hill, its chains rattling and clanking. Above us the sky was the color of lead and the rain dripped through the leaves with a monotonous beat.

"Ben," Stuart said to me finally, "my men are all in and they've got to have rest! My God, you ought to see the way they look at me! I can't stand it any longer."

"We are all about in the same boat," I told him. "The exercise will be over any time now. Don't let it get you down, kid."

He sat hunched over a little with his elbows on his knees while he rubbed his hands sort of aimlessly together. "Damn it, Ben!" he answered finally, lifting his voice a little. "It's too much to ask of men! All of the other outfits have gotten a chance to sleep and rest and no wonder that they can carry on. They couldn't if they had had a madman driving them the way we've been driven!"

"Take it easy," I said, glancing at Corporal Whistler. He was looking straight ahead with no expression on his face. "It won't be much longer now."

"It's been too long already," Stuart said. "I'm going to tell him that either my men sleep tonight or I'm going to the colonel and tell him just what the hell has been going on!"

We rolled on into the battery C.P. just then and I didn't have a chance to say anything more. Captain Quincy was standing by the small wall tent that housed the switchboard and he motioned us in out of the rain. His face was lined and tired but other than that he looked the same.

Stuart didn't look much like "Beau" Medary right now.

"Come in, gentlemen," he said. "I've some instructions that I want to give you. The exercise ends officially at six o'clock this afternoon."

I thought, "Thank God for that. Now Stu won't have a chance to blow his top," but my thankfulness was premature.

"Promptly at six," Captain Quincy was saying, "start picking up your field wire. Then get your trucks loaded up and assemble here. We'll march at five tomorrow morning for Cabcaban."

For a moment the silence was so heavy that you could almost cut it with a knife. Picking up that wire at night and in the rain and on roads that were like soap would take hours. And, if the exercises were over at six o'clock, why in the devil couldn't it wait? Stuart had jerked himself up suddenly and now was staring at Captain Quincy with a hard, wicked look.

"Did that order come from higher up, Captain Quincy?" he asked.

"No," Captain Quincy said, "It did not."

"Then why are you issuing it? You surely must know the condition that the men are in. They're dead on their feet right now," Stuart almost shouted. "To expect them to pick up the wire tonight is insane!"

"No, Lieutenant," Captain Quincy said quietly, "it's not insane. It's the thing that would be expected of them in war. And, if war ever comes, my men are not going into it in the way that I have seen others go. Unprepared in both body and mind. Thinking it's a game until it's too late and they're dead. Dead because some careless or ignorant or lazy officer has killed them just as surely as if he had been the one to pull the trigger. . . We'll pick up the wire, gentlemen."

Stuart leaned against the tent pole and I saw that there was a faint, hard little smile on his lips. He lifted a muddy hand and brushed at his face.

"Captain Quincy," he said softly, "I've watched you bully and browbeat and bedevil these men for three months now. Why you have done it I don't know. Perhaps to satisfy some vanity in your own small soul because it takes a small soul to do the things that you have done. And I guess it isn't important why you have done it. The thing that is important is that you're through! *Through,* do you understand? There is an inspector from Washington on the Rock now—I'm going to lay this whole thing before him and, when I'm finished, you'll be through!"

Stuart stopped a minute to catch his breath and I stood there looking out into the rain and feeling sick. The expression on Captain Quincy's face hadn't changed but the lines were deeper along his cheeks and his eyes looked more tired.

"And I want you to remember this, Captain Mathew Quincy," Stuart went on after a minute. "When you leave this battery there won't be *one damned man* that will be sorry to see you go! Just remember that, Captain Mathew Quincy!"

Stuart stopped and wiped his face again with his muddy hand and I was actually aware of the spat that the rain made as it hit the canvas of the tent. Captain Quincy stood looking at Stuart without any particular expression underneath that God-awful campaign hat. Then he reached out and took a folded sheet of paper from the top of the switchboard.

"I think that it will not be necessary for you to go to the inspector, Lieutenant," he said quietly. "I have already been relieved from command of this battery." He tapped the sheet of paper.

"We'll pick up the wire, gentlemen," he said again.

STUART and I went on back in the GMC but we didn't talk—there wasn't anything to say. Then presently, I got to thinking about Number Five light up there across the hogback and began to worry. I had left it in position since the rains had started because the rocky track along the spine of the ridge was too risky to go in and out in wet weather. The light would have to come out tonight, though.

We stopped at Stuart's C.P. while he gave his platoon sergeant instructions to start picking the wire up at six o'clock and then came on with me. One of his searchlight positions lay across the ridge from Number Five and I had told him that he could have the GMC to get over there as soon as we had gotten Number Five safely out.

We got something to eat and then started out, taking Sergeant McComb and Rajeski and the rest of the searchlight section with us. It was after six when we got to the position and the gray day was already beginning to fade. I walked along the hogback and I didn't like it but it didn't seem to bother Rajeski any.

"I'll bring her out, Lieutenant," he said.

They loaded the searchlight, winching it up into the back of the truck and securing the toggles and the rear curtain. It was beginning to get dark and the rain was coming down harder then ever as we worked the clumsy sound locator down the slope and hooked the ring over the pintle at the back of the truck. I heard the sound of a truck coming towards us up the ravine but gave it no particular thought.

"All set, Sergeant McComb?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," he said.

I signaled for the rest of the men to come on behind and then climbed up onto the running board of the truck, holding on with one hand. "All right, Rajeski," I said. "Let's go."

He eased the clutch in and we rolled

One of the stay chains had snapped and the heavy trailer was beginning to buckle.

slowly out onto the hogback. It was slippery as ice and the truck slewed and skidded but I had to admire the way that Rajeski handled it, his face screwed up a little as he crouched there with his forearms across the wheel. We had almost reached the hairpin turn at the end of the ridge when it happened.

I heard something snap sharply and leaned far out from the running board to look back. Then I saw what had happened and the bottom dropped out of my stomach. One of the stay chains which led back to the sound locator had snapped and the heavy trailer, shoving down the steep grade, was beginning to buckle on us. I yelled to Rajeski and he braked frantically but we were at the top of the turn now and there was too much weight for the tires to hold.

The truck slewed again viciously and was starting to tip a little as I shouted to Rajeski to jump and then I saw his white face looking back at me and I knew that he was caught on something inside the cab. I got the door open on my side and started to reach for him but my foot slipped and then I was sprawled on my back in the road with the truck's wheels sliding on by me.

I thought that I must be dreaming when I heard Captain Quincy's voice. "Hang onto her for a minute more, son!" he was yelling at Rajeski. "I'll get you!"

I saw him sprawl across the hood of the truck and disappear on the downhill side; then heard the cab door slam back. Everything seemed to hang suspended for a moment as I clawed my way back to my

feet. Then Rajeski suddenly tumbled out of the cab on my side, landing on his hands and knees in the safety of the road. I caught a fleeting glimpse of Captain Quincy's face and it was hard and thin as he wrestled with the wheel, trying to fight the big truck into the turn. For a short second I thought that he was going to make it; then the wheels spun on the slippery rock and the truck hung poised for a moment and then went over into the ravine. Halfway down it turned end for end and there was a sickening crash as it struck the bottom.

Stuart and Rajeski were the first ones down. When I got there Stuart was kneeling over Captain Quincy with the tears running down his cheeks. Rajeski was crying like a baby.

IT WAS a week later and things had settled back to normal on the Rock when they took Captain Quincy over to Sternberg General Hospital in Manila. They would keep him there, they said, until the next transport sailed and then send him back to the States. He was pretty badly busted up—but a few months would see him on his feet again, and ready to take command of the Stateside battalion assigned him in the orders received during the field exercises.

I was in acting command of the battery again and, on this morning, Miller, our new first sergeant came into the office. "Sir," he said, "Private Rajeski and some of the men want to go down to the boat and see Captain Quincy off. Is it all right, sir?"

"Yes," I said. "It's all right, Sergeant. I'm going myself."

He saluted and went on out again and I glanced at Stuart who was sitting there, smoking and looking out of the window. I wondered if he would say anything but he didn't—we hadn't talked much together since that night back there on Bataan.

The boat was to leave at ten that morning so at about half past nine I got my hat and went on down to the hospital because the doctors had said that I could ride to Bottomside in the ambulance with the captain. I remembered, too vividly, what Stuart had said in the battery C.P. that evening about "not one damned soul will be sorry to see you go" and I thought maybe I could make that a little easier if I was along.

Captain Quincy was on a stretcher and they were loading him in the ambulance when I got there. He smiled at me a little and held out his hand. "You're in acting command again, Kennedy?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," I said.

"You've got a good outfit, son," he went on after a minute. "None better. I hope you can keep it."

We didn't say anything more as the ambulance crawled on down the road toward Bottomside. It stopped and I got out first. The harbor boat was there and I saw a few Filipino stevedores wandering aimlessly about and a few native kids in shirts which didn't cover their stomachs. That was all—not even Rajeski—and I felt an angry bitterness boil up in me so that I could hardly speak. It was even worse when I saw the hurt in Captain Quincy's eyes as they hauled him out on the stretcher and he lifted his head and looked around.

Then, all at once, I heard it.

Drums suddenly beat a quick ruffle and then a band broke into "Hail, hail, the gang's all here!" and the battery came swinging out into the road and down to the wharf with shoes slamming down hard against the gravel and arms swinging together and voices lifting a tough, acclaiming chant in the morning sun. And, in front, marched Colonel Howarth and Stuart Medary and a tall, lean man whom I guessed to be the inspector from Washington.

Captain Quincy smiled as he watched them come. "A good outfit, Kennedy," he said softly to me. "No man will ever have a better one. . ."

And so, fifteen years later, Stuart and I sat there on the ruined veranda of the Bachelor Officers' Mess while we smoked our cigarettes and looked across the way at the burned out Cine which gaped, open-roofed in the sun and at the parade ground where the jungle was beginning to creep back in.

"I think that he was the greatest soldier that I have ever known, Ben," Stuart said slowly. "It was the thought of him as much as anything else that got me through those months in the Jap prison camps when the going really got tough."

"Yes," I said. "He was a soldier."

ILLUSTRATED BY
V. E. PYLES

DEEP-WATER Decision

The killer whale attacked a third and a fourth time.

By JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS

WITH his diver's tender assisting on the life line, Cort McKenna got a steel shoe through the bottom rung and laboriously climbed the plunging portside ladder. He heaved the heavy rope basket of shellfish aboard, and then leaned on the deck of the little twenty-six-foot abalone boat while Hal Larkin unscrewed his helmet. It was a relief no longer to hear the hissing of compressed air. McKenna smiled faintly when his tender placed a lighted cigarette between his lips, and after dragging deeply, let the smoke trickle slowly from his nostrils.

"This is your eighth dive today, Mac," Larkin said anxiously. "You look done in."

"Who wouldn't be? I spent more time fighting the boat's drag than prying off abalone."

From the boat operator's station over the engine cabin came a snort. Max Austin's weathered bulldog face was indignant as he removed his evil-smelling corncob and spat over the side.

"How can I hold position over your bubbles with a hundred horsepower motor in such seas? Ready to call quits?"

"I was whipped before the last two dives," McKenna admitted. "But I'm damned if I'll let Dawson . . ."

He broke off short, staring momentarily at the swells being smashed into veils of spray against the low, steep cliffs and at the soaring golden California hills above them, then across the running seas toward the other abalone boat less than fifty feet distant.

McKenna, who was a big man, seemed enormous in his bulky diving dress. His bushy black hair was only partially controlled by a round mink cap. Below it, the force and determination in his now tired face was relieved of severity by the humorous puckers at the corners of his blue eyes and wide mouth, by the cleft in his broad, square chin.

The other boat was climbing and falling in violent swoops like his own as the seas rode under it. Dave Dawson stood on the ladder and one of his crewmates was removing his helmet. His mates were ex-Flying-Fortress pilots who took turns as boat operator and tender, and as they were both large, plump, blond men who still wore Air Force caps, McKenna couldn't tell them apart.

Dawson turned and though his face wasn't clearly visible through the spray breaking over his boat, McKenna imagined that his sea-green eyes were narrowed beneath his bristling red brows.

"You had enough?" Dawson called.

"Have *you* had enough?" McKenna shouted back.

Dawson was breathing heavily. Red-headed, freckled and homely, his resolute and decisive expression marked him as a redoubtable man.

"Look, Mac," he said reasonably. "You're dead tired. Why wear yourself out for a few abalone?"

McKenna bristled. "Why wear *yourself* out? Going down again, Dawson?"

"That depends on you, Mac."

"Sure," McKenna growled. "Minute we start back to San Simeon Bay, you'll be diving again. 'Iron-Man' Dawson—never knows when to stop!"

"From a guy like you, Mac, that's good!"

HAL LARKIN'S face was troubled. A slender man with a high forehead and handsome despite a slightly brooding expression, he looked scarcely older than he had twenty years before when he'd gone to a San Luis Obispo high school with Dawson and McKenna. Always conscientious about taking up slack and seeming to sense danger below, he was regarded as the best diver's tender on any abalone boat.

"Mac," he pleaded, in lowered tone, "don't get into another endurance contest with Dawson. It always continues until you're both limp as collapsed diving dresses."

"Who started it?" McKenna demanded. "I began diving two miles from Dawson's boat and he comes over here to make an issue of it!"

"You worked closer to each other with every dive. You always draw each other like magnets! Time one of you showed some sense."

"Well, let Dawson stop then. I'll quit if he does."

"Think he'll admit you're the better man after the years you two have been fighting it out, Mac?" Larkin asked quietly. "Why, I remember how you both fought for quarterback's position on the football squad. Dawson won but was injured, and he could never get the place back from you. Same in baseball, only he got to be pitcher, while you were the star batter. And you two were practically our whole track team. Dawson was only two points ahead of you one season, and you edged him out by five points the next."

"Don't have to go back that far!" said Austin dryly. "You two rushed the same girl until she decided she was just the trophy and married another guy. Then, after you both became abalone divers, you practically killed yourselves trying to buy your boats first—and met in the bank the day you paid your loans. Last thing, you were trying to pay off the mortgage on your house before Dawson paid his."

"He beat me by a week," said McKenna grimly.

"Ha!" said the old boat operator explo-

sively. "Neither of you ever won a clean-cut decision in twenty years! Wouldn't surprise me if Dawson got tired of it some day and cut your air-hose."

"Dawson never did an underhanded thing in his life," snapped McKenna. "That's why he's such a hard man to beat. He has no weaknesses."

"Ain't no such animal!" growled Austin.

"That shows you've never been up against Dave Dawson!" McKenna flared. He hesitated, then decided to confide in his mates. "If you must know, this isn't any endurance contest. Cal Hitchcock wants to sell his abalone plant."

Larkin moaned. "And I suppose you both hope to buy it?"

"Naturally," said McKenna. "And it will be the first real decision either of us has ever taken over the other. We were both practically broke after paying for our homes, so we started even. And we've been comparing checks when Hitchcock pays us for our catches Saturday nights."

Interest kindled in Austin's bulldog face. "How you coming, Mac?"

"Not a fathom's difference, so far. Some weeks he's ahead; I'm ahead others. Hitchcock wants all cash. And the banker won't antagonize the future owner by loaning to either of us. So a few dozen abalone may decide."

McKenna reflected that his dream for twenty years of gaining one decisive victory over Dave Dawson had become almost an obsession. Through all those years he'd felt outclassed, for it seemed as if Dawson set a pace that he could meet only by calling on every reserve of mental and physical toughness. Even his inconclusive victories had been no satisfaction, for Dawson apparently ended each contest with his confidence unimpaired while McKenna had the feeling he'd won by a fluke against a better man. And now his best diving days lay behind; long hours underwater bothered him more than formerly. If he owned the plant, he'd be independent—could dive when he pleased, and not at the killing pace he felt impelled to meet now whenever his boat was near Dawson's.

It was probably his last chance for independence, probably the last time either of them would have an opportunity for a decisive decision over the other. And knowing the quality of Dave Dawson's determination, McKenna's heart faltered. He didn't believe he could do it, but he was going to try again to beat the better man.

Dawson called, "Well, how about it, Mac? Calling it a day?"

It sounded like a taunt. McKenna's jaw stiffened with anger. He stared at the crested seas rolling in upon the little boat, breaking green over the bows.

"Screw on my helmet, Larkin. He'll get his answer!"

Larkin's brooding face showed concern. "Don't be a fool, Mac. Dawson's as dog-tired as you are. In seas like this, we can't help dragging you. And your line may foul."

McKenna grabbed an empty abalone basket by the circular piece of hose forming its mouth and held it up to be sure the bottom cord was secured. He tightened the cord holding the abalone bar to his right wrist.

"Dawson's never tired," he said bleakly.

Resignedly Larkin squeezed tobacco juice on the front and side vision plates and dipped the helmet in the seas and emptied it. This would prevent fogging of the glasses.

Opening the valve at the back of the helmet, air began hissing. He slipped it over McKenna's head, screwed it a quarter-turn, locked it on with the back-clamp, and clasped the air-hose to the wide belt.

McKenna descended a few rungs, bracing against the seas breaking against him, for he was so angry at Dawson's stubbornness that he wouldn't wait for Max Austin to make a lee with the boat. When the seas quieted momentarily, he jumped sidewards from the ladder. Air was squeezing into the top of his dress so that his sleeves ballooned to resemble enormous sausages. Larkin supported him with the line while he adjusted his air-valve.

He waved and Larkin slacked away on the life-line. A silver comber was rolling upon him as his helmet slipped beneath the surface. Long, waving strands of seaweed slipped past, turning from brown to purple to brown again as they swayed in the currents. Down in this underseas jungle the light was brilliant, though diffused, and had a pale greenish quality.

The white walls of a crevasse slid by

and it was so narrow that once or twice McKenna pushed himself away from one wall or the other to avoid puncturing his dress against coral. The soft light reflected from the sides of this fissure gave everything an air of fantasy—the rainbow-hued fish, the waving strands of seaweed, the red starfish and great, dark needle-pointed sea urchins on ledges that glided past.

And then he was on the bottom, digging cross-cleated steel shoes into the uneven ocean floor as he fought for balance against the strong current flowing along the submarine canyon. Here at forty feet the subdued light was still luminous, reflecting from the large oval shells of three red abalone clinging to a ledge. He couldn't have missed mollusks of such size, so he knew this wasn't the crevasse in which he'd previously fished.

PERPENDICULAR prongs, eight inches apart, projected from McKenna's abalone bar to measure the shellfish. But these abalone were obviously of legal size so he placed the lower prong against the ledge, slid the point of the bar quickly under the shell, and using the prong as a lever, flicked the mollusk off before it could draw its shell tightly against the rock with its suction surface.

The abalone spiraled and sank through the round opening of the waiting basket. McKenna pried off a second abalone and had his bar poised to take the third when he was spun around and hurled against the rock ledge. He grasped a jutting corner of rock and for fifteen seconds thought his hold would be broken by the pull on his line and air-hose. Then his lines eased a little, and he jerked angrily on the lifeline to ask for more slack, though he knew the line might foul.

McKenna was still shaky when he tried to take the last abalone. Accidentally he touched it and the mollusk clamped to the ledge so that he couldn't insert the point of the bar beneath the shell, so he passed it up.

He worked along the bottom, taking a few more abalone that were camouflaged by sea-growth on their shells and almost buried in seaweed. Then he was dragged against a rock and over a waist-high ledge, stopping only when he used his abalone bar like an alpinist's pick to stay his movement. He scrambled up quickly, afraid that air might balloon the legs of the dress, turn him upside down so that he'd lose his lead chest weights and rise feet first.

Half a dozen good-sized abalone rewarded him for the rough treatment, and then he worked back to the crevasse bottom. But almost immediately he was again dragged. Larkin's caution in never allowing much slack helped prevent fouled lines, but it was hard on a diver when the boat was in heavy swells. Annoyed now, McKenna signalled for line and after acknowledging the signals, Larkin asked him to come up.

McKenna thought of Dawson prying off abalone in another crevasse, earning the money to buy the Seaview Abalone Plant, buying his freedom from this brutal drudgery—and gave a negative signal.

The currents grew so strong that it was all McKenna could do to move against them. Sometimes he was leaning at a sharp angle and shoving with his cleats without making any headway. The light above was fading, and strong currents stirred up silt, making it hard to see abalone as he worked from one crevasse to another. Dragging the increasing weight of the basket was hardest of all.

But at length, having taken twenty-four abalone, he braced himself against a shoulder of rock and gave two jerks. An empty basket was lowered on the life line, and McKenna sent up the partially filled one.

He had the mental tenacity of a good abalone diver and kept going even when his mind began to wander with fatigue. But the currents grew worse, the boat dragged him more frequently. And the roar of air entering his helmet had a hypnotic effect, so that he worked at times without consciously knowing what he was doing. Yet even in this drugged state, he sent up a second basket and a third.

His fourth basket was two-thirds filled when he felt three jerks on his line. It was moments before he realized that Larkin was asking if he would come up. He gave a negative signal, but his tender once more repeated the request.

Twice McKenna tried to signal, "Leave me alone," but each time he was dragged before he could tug on the line. Then he

was moving up along the sides of the crevasse, quite helpless. Simmering anger kept his mind from going adrift again as he was pulled up.

The ladder rose and fell so rapidly that he had to be almost lifted by his lines. When his helmet was off, he saw Austin had left the wheel to help.

"Get that pipe to leeward before you asphyxiate me," he growled at Austin. "Larkin, what's the idea of heaving me up? Dawson will think I quit!"

Larkin motioned toward the other boat, where the tender was removing Dawson's helmet. "We agreed with his crew to pull up you two stubborn fools before our propellers parted your hoses."

The boat heeled heavily in the seas. McKenna's anger subsided.

"Well, since Dawson's quitting, too. . ."

From Dawson's home on a hillside above Seaview, he looked out the next morning between the graceful radiata pines which framed his view. A smoky cloud bank obscured the horizon and the wide sweep of gray ocean visible from the window was flecked with breaking combers. His children, "Butch" and Cathy, joined him at the window.

"You're not fishing today, Daddy?" the little girl asked.

A deep, hearty laugh came from McKenna. Turning, he saw Anne scanning the Pacific with troubled eyes. But she'd been a fisherman's wife for many years and said nothing.

WHEN in doubt, the abalone fishermen of Seaview could judge whether diving conditions were possible by driving south to Pilot Rock. If the surf broke white over that small offshore pinnacle, the seas outside were too hazardous. After breakfast, when McKenna drove south for a look, he found Dawson's old sedan on the low bluff.

The freckled diver smiled wryly as he pointed to the breakers foaming over Pilot Rock. "That convinces me, Mac."

"No fisherman with any sense would try it," agreed McKenna.

"No?" And Dawson's sea-green eyes narrowed. "But how about you?"

"Think I'm crazy? However, I wouldn't put it past you, Dawson."

"*Me!* I want to live to buy that plant!"

"Same here. We saved ourselves some grief driving down here."

McKenna backed his old truck and started home. Dawson soon passed him, and as the sedan disappeared, McKenna wondered. The redheaded diver could stand severe punishment. He might try to dive. And this possibility so disturbed McKenna by the time he reached Seaview that he picked up Hal Larkin and Max Austin and drove northward nine miles to San Simeon Bay.

Dawson's sedan was parked behind the red warehouse. "Just as I suspected," McKenna growled.

Larkin and Austin looked depressed as they gathered up their gear. At the end of the dilapidated pier they found Dawson and his two plump mates.

"A tugboat couldn't drag me out on a day like this," Dawson said grimly. "But I knew you'd try to sneak in extra diving time."

"Listen to the man!" observed McKenna bitterly. "Tries to blame me! Who got here first?"

"I'd have turned home if you hadn't come."

"Dawson, I've known you from way back."

"It's the truth," Dawson insisted irritably.

"Go home then, and I'll follow."

Dawson peered out at the feathered water beyond the bay.

"That would stop me any time. But not Mac. Come on, boys!"

The big ex-pilots assembled their gear and followed Dawson down the creaking stairs to the landing platform.

"See!" said McKenna. "That guy never has enough!"

Larkin's dark and handsome face became gloomy. "Nothing could make him go out today if he wasn't sure you'd be diving."

The old operator had, by herculean effort, gotten his venerable corncob lighted and there was a smell reminiscent of a burning city dump. "Now I got steam up, I'll tell you something, Mac. I wish I'd bought Hanson's chicken ranch when I had the chance."

"Probably neither of us can dive today," said McKenna.

"You ain't going to work near him and get into another diving marython, are

you?" pleaded Austin. "That's what gets me."

"No chance! We'll sail north and try it behind Blackdome Rocks. Only shelter we'll find today."

Dawson and his men had rowed out to his boat in the skiff, and they had to wait until his boat towed the skiff back. By the time McKenna's boat was started and the skiff back at its mooring, Dawson was well out in the bay.

Following, they saw his boat round the point and turn north. Austin turned to McKenna, who was beside him at the wheel.

"Now what do we do?"

"Sail north. Too open along the southern coast today."

"I got a funny hunch . . ." But Austin didn't finish.

Once outside the bay, the little boat had hard going. A boat small enough to work among rocks was a tiny craft for open sea. It shuddered under the crashing impacts of the beam seas. Clear green water broke over the bows every time Austin turned into the swells. Sheets of salty brine deluged them constantly. Austin cursed with feeling as steam billowed from his sodden pipe. McKenna worked aft, finding the engine-room flooding, and started the pump. Then he lay beside Larkin on the after-hatch, to rest for the ordeal ahead. But the pitching and rolling made rest impossible.

For three hours they fought northward. A hoarse cry from the boat operator then brought McKenna to his feet. The boat they were following was disappearing behind a series of massive rocky pinnacles that formed a natural breakwater a mile offshore.

"Just what I thought would happen," shouted Austin. "Dawson had the same idea. Now where do we fish?"

"Behind Blackdome, of course! No other safe place today."

"Here we go again! I'm going to buy me a chicken ranch and quit this foolishness!"

McKenna grinned. "What do you want? Aren't you a glamor boy?"

Snorting, the old man hunched dejectedly over the wheel.

The swells boomed and crashed against the great rocks, but as they rounded Blackdome the boat ceased rolling and rode smoothly. Dawson's boat was drifting in a sheltered corner where the pinnacles made a right-angle turn—the exact spot where McKenna hoped to fish—and his crew were already helping him into his diving rig. It remained for McKenna to take a less favorable position closer to open water. He'd tried diving there before and found it too risky because of the sharp dropoffs and the depth. But now he had no choice, unless he wished to crowd Dawson and risk entangling their lines. The shallower water closer to the cliffs, he knew from experience, had been stripped of most legal-sized abalone by other divers.

'This will do," he called to Austin.

Shoving back the after-hatch cover, McKenna sat down and began pulling on the rubber diving dress. Larkin buckled on his heavy steel shoes while McKenna rubbed his hands and wrists with petroleum jelly. He worked his hands through the tight wrist-bands, pulled on cotton gloves, and then sat relaxed while Larkin fitted on the copper collar and the strips that clamped the top of the dress to it.

After the life line was secured around his waist, and the wide leather belt buckled over it, McKenna rose. Larkin gripped his line in case he should fall overboard as he worked forward past the cabin. McKenna kicked the diving ladder overboard on the way, and it swung down from its crossbrace. He crawled onto the ladder and waited while Larkin went aft to start the air-compressor and Austin prepared the helmet.

"Watch the lines here," McKenna cautioned, as Larkin turned on the helmet's air-valve. "Some pretty bad dropoffs."

"About seventy-five feet, wasn't it?" asked Larkin.

"Some places are deeper than that. And don't let me down fast."

Larkin nodded, and fitted on the helmet. McKenna jumped from the ladder, adjusted his valve, and waved. As he started down, he could see the dark sloping sides of Blackdome clearly. Cleft by crevasses, bearded with the sea-growth of centuries, it had a forbidding aspect as the dark walls slipped slowly by. When the light began fading, the thought crossed his mind that this might be a sanctuary for octopi and Conger eels; he'd better be on guard. He adjusted his

air-valve once in mid-passage, again when his feet lodged on slippery rocks.

IT took minutes to become accustomed to the twilight gloom. Besides the pinnacle rocks there were others, immense in themselves. But it was toward Blackdome that he moved—until he felt a warning suction, a tidal current sweeping him forward. He had not encountered this before, but he'd not previously approached so close to the massive rocks and perhaps the tide had then been different. Sensing there might be a crevasse at the base of Blackdome, with a current like an underwater river, McKenna turned and tried to fight his way against the moving wall of water.

But even when leaning against it, he could not gain. And each time his cross-cleated shoes slipped, the buoyancy of his dress lifted him and he was swept back. After fighting a losing battle for minutes, he considered asking Larkin to pull him up. But before doing that, he tried moving crosscurrent. Though he lost ground, he was soon beyond the swiftest flow of the current. Presently, winded but unhurt, he reached one of the larger rocks and paused to rest.

He judged he must be eighty feet down, below the most favorable depth for abalone. But the hazardous conditions at this spot had discouraged abalone fishermen. As he rested, McKenna noticed large oval shells buried in the deep seagrowth covering the rock.

He'd never discovered this rock before, and now he began prying off abalone in earnest. Within ten minutes he'd filled his basket with thirty-six large shellfish. Fourteen dollars toward the plant! he thought—for he received a diver's half share, as well as a sixth share for the boat. Two tugs signalled that a basket was waiting, and Larkin sent down an empty one on the life line and pulled up the filled one.

The barrier of time and space is removed in the depths, and McKenna was not conscious of working long. He filled one basket after another without moving from that large rock. With no sense of fatigue or passing time, he was surprised when his tender jerked the line three times, asking whether he'd come up. McKenna gave a negative signal and continued working. After collecting six more baskets, Larkin inquired again and McKenna gave in.

Larkin raised him in slow stages—indicating a long dive. Taking warning, McKenna exercised vigorously each time he halted to expel excess nitrogen from his blood. Only after pulling himself up the ladder did he realize how tired he was.

Larkin laid the helmet on deck, saying severely, "Three hours, Mac. Dawson's made three dives in that time. Trying to kill yourself?"

McKenna grinned and accepted a lighted cigarette in silence. But the weariness would not wear off, so he went aft and let Larkin remove his dress.

"How many?" he asked Austin.

The boat operator looked at the tally board. "Forty-seven dozen and two abalone."

"You've made yourself a couple of hundred bucks," said Larkin. "And yesterday was a tough day. Why not knock off?"

McKenna glanced at the other boat and saw that his rival was still below. He pulled his sleeping bag from the hold, stretched it out on deck, and crawled in. "We'll see what Dawson does. Give me an hour."

Refreshed from the sleep, he sat up and saw Dawson plunging from the ladder for another descent. "How's he doing?" he asked Austin.

"You were ahead before, but I think he's caught up."

Energetically McKenna slipped from his bag and started pulling on his dress. Ten minutes later he was on the ladder, and Larkin was preparing to screw on his helmet when a cry came from the other boat.

The plump ex-pilot serving as tender flung down the long-poled kelp knife with which he'd been cutting away kelp from around the air-hose, and started pulling up the life line hurriedly. But he brought up only a few yards when the line resisted his efforts. The boat operator swung around his enclosure to help, but without result.

"Good Lord!" Larkin cried hoarsely. "They've cut his air-hose with that knife, and now his line's fouled."

"Dawson has only enough air to keep him alive maybe five minutes," muttered McKenna. "I told him he ran risks break-

ing in two new men at once! Austin—!" But he saw the old man already running to take the wheel, and turned to his tender. "My helmet, quick!"

"I'm letting you down fast," Larkin said.

"Right," said McKenna, and the helmet went over his head.

Less than a minute later their boat drew alongside Dawson's. No bubbles were rising and the two big men still strained on the line. McKenna studied the direction it took in the water before jumping.

Larkin kept his word—the descent was fast. McKenna had to blow and swallow repeatedly to equalize the air pressure in his ear channels as he went down. He gave a single tug to say he'd touched bottom. He was in a narrow crevasse, perhaps fifty feet down, and when his first hurried glance failed to reveal the other diver, he started down the sloping crevasse but stopped in a moment. Above him was a bend in the fissure. Better look beyond it first! Slipping and stumbling as he tried to make haste against the encumbering water, he rounded the bend and found Dawson.

Dawson had shut off his exhaust valve to conserve his air; no bubbles were rising from his helmet. Reeling drunkenly, he gave one last feeble tug on his line as McKenna approached. Then, sagging forward, he would have fallen if McKenna hadn't caught his belt. McKenna heaved hard on the line, but he couldn't free it, either.

Momentarily he considered having Larkin pull him up until he could find where the line was fouled and free it. No; that would take too long! Dawson would strangle within three minutes or less.

Desperate situations require desperate measures, and McKenna could see only one possibility now. Slipping his knife from its sheath, he slashed Dawson's life line and then gave three hard tugs on his own line.

They started moving upward. McKenna's chest felt tight as he gripped Dawson's body in his arms. He hoped the line would support their combined weight. If it parted, he himself might be in trouble. He didn't like to be pulled up by his air-hose, and he doubted whether it would raise two divers.

But the line didn't part. McKenna's helmet broke water near the ladder. Larkin must have secured his life line around the towing bit, for when the tender and Austin relieved him of his burden, he sank and was suspended so that he could see the bottom of the boat through the pale-green water. And it was Austin who pulled him up a minute later and unscrewed his helmet.

Dawson lay on deck, gasping for breath. His lips were flecked with a bloody foam and blood trickled from his nostrils.

"You're not giving him first aid?" McKenna asked.

"Doesn't need it," said Larkin. "He's coming around. His tongue seemed to be out a foot and I thought he'd strangled. But when I pushed it back, he started breathing."

"He'll make it," McKenna decided.

For half an hour Dawson gagged and coughed up blood. Color began returning to his face and his eyes lost their haggard look.

"Fate handed you the plant, Mac," he said weakly.

"What do you take me for?" McKenna snapped. "You always played the game hard but square."

Dawson's bloody lips curved with a feeble smile. "Don't think you can flatter me into handing you that plant. I'm still in the running."

"You will be in a week."

"I'll be diving again tomorrow, Mac. Want to bet?"

It was that indomitable, never-say-die spirit that was the despair of any man who ran up against Dawson. McKenna wouldn't bet, knowing only too well what Dawson would do if he did.

"Lay off for a week," he begged. "I'll lay off, too."

The cool green eyes narrowed as Dawson said softly, "Think I can't take it, eh, Mac? I'll show you!"

"Pipe down!" McKenna said, but his spirits sank at the knowledge of the kind of man he was pitted against.

THE weather moderated the next day, and true to his promise, Dave Dawson was at the San Simeon pier, looking pale but determined. McKenna allowed Dawson to leave first. When he turned south-

ward, McKenna turned north with a view to sparing his rival another endurance contest which, at this point, might do him irreparable harm.

McKenna returned to Blackdome. Fishing was so good that he and his crew spent a miserable night in sleeping bags on the narrow deck so they could fish a second day before returning with their catch. Both holds were filled and they had taken better than two hundred dozen abalone in those two days.

But the second day McKenna twice came near disaster from stepping into deep crevasses. Once Larkin had the line and brought him up short before he could be squeezed by the suddenly increased pressure he would have been subjected to if he'd plunged from the dropoff. The second time his tender was carrying a full abalone basket to the after-hatch to empty it when Austin's shout brought him running forward to seize the swiftly unreeling line. There had not been time in either case for McKenna to adjust his valves as he fell, so he abandoned the hazardous spot.

For the first time McKenna's Saturday check for his week's catch was substantially larger than Dawson's. But Dawson made it up the following week when he discovered some deep-water rocks directly off Seaview that abalone divers had never found. They yielded nearly three hundred dozen in three days' fishing. So they were still in relatively the same position, so far as McKenna could determine.

Two or three weeks of good fishing might give either of them the plant. The weather, however, was hateful. On many days strong winds forced them to cease diving after brutal punishment below, and some days no abalone boats attempted to fish. Once both McKenna and Dawson tried Piedras Blancas Rocks, only to be forced to leave when the boats became unmanageable. So a month passed with little change.

Then the winds died and most of the abalone boats, including McKenna's and Dawson's, fished to the northward along the San Simeon coast. This coast was treacherous for small boats, many having been lost there. The offshore waters were dotted with rocks. Giant combers thundered against the base of the sheerwater cliffs and rolled back in gushing, white-ridged swells. Only during dead calms was diving safe there, and if a squall struck and a boat were wrecked there was small chance even for crews to reach shore through the roaring breakers, or to climb the precipitous cliffs if they did. Yet for men willing to face these risks, the San Simeon offered rich rewards in abalone.

McKenna and Dawson would dive for two days, and return the second, before the abalone died. They had one week of good fishing, and then the surf began booming and the heavy swells made diving dangerous. The other boats turned southward, but McKenna's and Dawson's remained. They were playing for large stakes and were close to their goal.

They avoided each other, however, and it was quite by accident one day that the boats approached opposite sides of a large offshore rock. McKenna worked around the seaward side, and so did Dawson. When they came up to rest, the boats were scarcely thirty feet apart. McKenna was unwilling to be driven off by his rival; Dawson must have felt the same way. So, after some banter, they dived again.

Eventually they reached the same point on the rock and collided. McKenna had been so intent on what he was doing that it gave him a start. Dawson, even more startled, drew his knife. He returned it to its sheath and shoved McKenna good-naturedly and they began moving in opposite directions.

But they'd moved but a few feet when a shadow swept swiftly across the rock.

McKenna had no idea what caused the shadow. But there was a jutting ledge, with just space for him to slip beneath it. He flattened himself against the wall and turned his head in his helmet, trying to see out of the side window. He couldn't discover what caused the shadow, but he saw Dawson moving as fast as a man could in water, apparently seeking some projection where he could duck for safety.

There wasn't room for them both beneath the jutting ledge. But McKenna turned, grasping Dawson tightly and thus squeezed some of the air from their dresses —that he knew from the increased pressure on his legs and body. This allowed enough extra space so that Dawson was nearly beneath the ledge.

McKenna had a fleeting glimpse of something glossy black with a white under-

side as it struck the ledge. His air-hose and life-line jerked. A powerful caudal fin thrashed, sending the water spinning in swirling eddies and then it was gone. Dawson reached for McKenna's hand and placed it on the front of his belt. McKenna understood that the other diver wished support so that he could lean out. His glimpse was very brief. He ducked under the ledge and McKenna gripped him a moment before that glossy black and white body again struck the ledge protecting them. Once more his line jerked.

Their helmets would conduct sound to a limited degree, and knowing this, Dawson placed his vision plate against McKenna's and shouted, "Killer-whale!"

The words made icy fingers crawl down McKenna's spine. The killer-whale or grampus—a ferocious type of dolphin—must have been attracted by their air-bubbles or by the human scent they carried. The mammal might never reach them because of the ledge, but if it continued attacking, it would eventually foul their air-hoses or life lines and part them.

This became increasingly clear as the killer-whale attacked a third and a fourth time.

SOMEHOW it seemed to McKenna that he'd never thought faster or more clearly. All this was happening because he'd been unwilling to concede what he'd known in his heart for twenty years—that Dave Dawson was the better man. If he'd been willing to admit that, he wouldn't be diving along the San Simeon coast in heavy swells, he wouldn't have encountered this grampus. If he died now, it would be because he'd tried to match Dawson's stride. And it was beyond him.

Facing what now seemed plain facts, McKenna didn't hate Dawson. It was himself he blamed. And holding himself responsible, he felt he owed Dawson something: a chance to live.

There seemed but one course now. To hold Dawson while his dress inflated and then, releasing him, allow him to "pop" to the surface. His tenders might get him aboard before the killer-whale could reach him. But Dawson was proud, would never allow McKenna to send him up first if he guessed his rival's intentions.

The water eddied as the great black and white creature swept by again. And for the first time McKenna saw its wicked conical teeth.

Though shaken, he seized Dawson's arms and twisted. Dawson must have thought his position disadvantageous, for he turned, with his back to McKenna. McKenna pulled him backward before the fleeting shadow darted across the ocean floor once more and disappeared.

Before Dawson suspected his intention, McKenna got the toe of his steel shoe against the tire-casing heel of Dawson's and pressed down, while twisting the other diver sidewise. He pried off the other shoe in the same manner, giving Dawson no chance to recover from his surprise. Lastly he closed the exhaust-valve on Dawson's helmet.

Dawson started to struggle, then stopped. His dress was already swelling. There was not a thing he could do.

Enough of Dawson's dress extended beyond the ledge so that the killer-whale might have hurled him from cover. But the grampus must have been injured by previous attacks on the ledge and this time gave it leeway. By then, it was all McKenna could do to hold the inflated dress with one hand while he held himself from rising by gripping a rocky projection.

Now he pushed Dawson out from cover and the buoyancy of his dress did the rest. Rising like a huge bubble, his feet swept past the ledge and disappeared.

McKenna waited what seemed like minutes, and then the killer-whale was back. He hoped it meant Dawson was safe. Deliberately now, McKenna squatted and unbuckled his shoes but did not remove them. He shut his air-valve outlet, gripped the projection of rock, and waited.

His dress inflated so rapidly that he did not believe he could hold on until the killer-whale returned. Only after it had flashed past could he safely "pop up." The mammal blundered against either his air-hose or line, for McKenna was pulled sidewise and outward from his hiding place. Thrown completely clear of his loosened shoes! Blinding pain followed and it seemed but an instant before he was spreadeagled on the surface in his ballooned dress and being drawn rapidly toward the ladder.

Larkin and Austin pulled him up so that the tender was able to open the air-

valve. The excess air hissed out like a punctured tire. The dress resumed its normal size and a moment later collapsed when his helmet was off. Austin hastily returned to the wheel, for the boat was drifting beam-on toward the rock.

The boats were lying almost side by side. Dawson was holding his nose and blowing to try to clear his blocked ears, the result of his swift ascent. Presently he succeeded and stood up and watched Larkin helping McKenna from his dress. His face was strangely sober and subdued.

"Mac," he said gravely, "I've got to admit it at last. I've known for twenty years I wasn't in your class. Damned if I haven't tried to keep up, but you set too fast a gait for me."

McKenna's square jaw dropped. "*I* set too fast a gait! Why, you dope, I was the one who was tagging along, trying to keep up with *you!* Now I'm through!"

Dawson's eyes widened, his mouth parted, and then he gulped.

"Do you mean that, Mac?"

"Of course I do!"

Dawson's eyes dropped. Slowly he grinned. "Mac, I don't know what to make of it. All these years I figured that if I could just keep on Cort McKenna's heels, I was pretty damned good."

"Suffering Jonah!" cried McKenna. "Do you mean I've been fighting all these years to keep up with a guy who thought he was trying to keep up with me?"

"Guess that's it, Mac! Hard to get used to the idea, isn't it? But you have to admit it kept us both humping."

"Somehow," McKenna said slowly, "I don't want any decision over you now."

Dawson's green eyes twinkled. "Sort of feel like that myself. Between us, we have enough to buy that abalone plant right this minute. With a partner like you, Mac, I'd never worry about getting slack."

"Suits me," McKenna cried eagerly. "Suits me fine!"

Max Austin removed his aged pipe and after regarding it sourly for a moment, cast it overboard.

"No more bucking bad diving conditions," he said, brightening. "Things is looking up! Guess I won't buy me no chicken ranch after all!"

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The mules ran right off the bank and jumped head-first into the baptizing hole.

HOLY WATER

GIPSON

I DIDN'T much want to do it. I told Jay it was liable to get us into bad trouble. But Jay wouldn't listen. Jay was like his papa; when he got his mind set, he wouldn't listen to nobody.

"Squat down!" he said. "Quick. Before they see us!"

So I squatted with him behind a big prickly-pear clump and watched him frown and wrinkle up his button nose and grit his teeth while he pulled a sand-burr out of his heel. The burr came loose; Jay's face straightened. He went to grubbing in his pocket for a rock.

I looked through an opening between the spiny pads of the prickly-pear. Down past the corn-crib, I could see Jay's big sister Sis hanging on the front-yard gate. Her corn-silk hair shone in the late sunlight. She was telling her fellow good-bye. Her fellow's name was Ransome Bard and he was a big spur-jingling wild horse rider.

Ransome was already outside the gate. He was being careful about untying a snorty black bronc horse from a mesquite tree. Any minute now, he'd be riding up the trail past our prickly-pear.

Jay got a smooth round rock out of his pocket. He fitted it into the pouch of his slingshot and his face lit up with the grin that always gave me an uneasy feeling.

"We'll see what kind of a bronc-peeler he is," he said.

"Your papa's liable to bust our tails," I said. "He said he would if he ever caught us slinging rocks at livestock."

I sure did like to visit my friend Jay out here on his papa's Coke County farm; but sometimes I wished Jay wasn't so full of devilment.

"Papa ain't caught us yet," he said. "Anyhow, Papa don't set much store by this feller of Sis'. He says Ransome's a show-off. I heard him quarreling at her about it last night."

I TORE off a ragged corner of my big toe-nail and chewed on it while I studied Ransome through the prickly-pear pads. I guessed he was a little bit of a show-off, all right. He sported the fanciest rigging in the country. He rode a low-cantle, swell-forked bronc-buster's saddle that was hand-stamped with rosebuds. He wore spike-heeled boots with white butterflies stitched in the tops. He had yellow bat-wing chaps and a red neckerchief and a white stiff-brim hat that he kept slanted to one side of his black head. His saddle and chaps were set with silver conchas that he kept polished, and sometimes, when he came riding in off the range, he glittered and blazed in the sunlight like a big jewel.

But I couldn't hold any of that against him. Give me time and I'd grow up and break wild horses for a living and sport me a pretty rig.

I watched Ransome ease his hand up till he'd caught the cheek piece of the black bronc's hackamore. He pulled the horse's head down and around till it was safe to put a foot into the stirrup. Then, quick and easy as a cat, he went up.

The black snorted and humped up under him and went to crab-walking. He didn't pitch, but he looked like he would the first chance he got. Folks always claimed Ransome did his woman-courting riding the worst horse he was breaking out. They said he thought it made him look bold and reckless. They said he liked to listen to the girls begging him to be careful.

Sis was begging him to be careful now.

Ransome grinned at her and rode up the dusty trail. The black kept blowing and sidling about, hunting hard for an excuse to fall to pieces under the saddle and unload Ransome.

He didn't have to hunt long. Jay waited till they were close and Ransome was twisted in his saddle, waving Sis good-bye. Then Jay half rose, whipped the sling over his head, and let fly.

The humming rock struck the horse in the flank.

It was like touching off a stick of dynamite. The black squealed, bogged his head and quit the earth with the saddle skirts popping.

Caught off guard like that, Ransome didn't have a chance. The bronc sent him sprawling—pretty clothes and all—right spang into the middle of our prickly-pear clump.

He yelped like a scared dog when he landed. He yelped again, getting to his feet. I guess with all the prickly-pear stickers he had stuck in him, he had a right to holler.

"You confounded little devil!" he roared; and I don't ever expect to see a madder bronc-buster come charging out of a prickly-pear clump any quicker.

We broke to run, of course, but we were too late. We hadn't expected the black to unload Ransome right on top of us in that prickly-pear. We were sort of stunned.

Ransome collared Jay and dragged him across a bent knee. Then he went to work on the seat of Jay's pants with the flat of his big bronc-buster hand. He sure set Jay's seat smoking. I mean!

It scared me till I couldn't run. I just stood there and watched Jay kick and squirm and yell bloody murder and gnaw on Ransome's bat-wing chaps. He was try-

ing to bite Ransome's leg, Jay was, only the bull-hide leather was too thick.

The bronc went pitching and bawling on up the trail, loose stirrups flopping high.

Off to one side, I heard a shout. It was Jay's papa. He came around the corner of the corn-crib with his hat off and a harness hame clutched in his hand.

Jay's papa was a little man with a big temper, and he sure looked riled now. He came running up, waving the harness hame and threatening to cave Ransome's head in if he didn't quit beating up on his baby boy. He aimed to do it, too, I guess. He ran up and swung at Ransome's head, and Ransome just barely turned Jay loose in time to reach and grab the hame out of his hands.

Back at the front-yard gate, I heard Sis scream.

Jay's papa wasn't much more than half as big as Ransome, but seemed like size didn't make him any difference. He came at the bronc-buster with his fists now, cussing and crying, he was that mad.

Ransome had longer arms, though; he could keep him held off.

"Now, you better simmer down, old man," Ransome told him. "If you'd been working this little devil's tail-end over, like was needed, the job wouldn't have fell to me."

JAY'S papa shot a wild look around for something else to brain Ransome with. He spotted a dead mesquite limb lying beside the trail. He ran to pick it up. "No yeller-livered Bard can git by with laying hands on a son of Ike Farr's!" he shouted.

Ransome growled back at him. "You ain't so wide across the britches, little man," he warned, "but what you could get them dusted . . . If you was to come at me with that mesquite club!"

That stopped Jay's papa. Or the look in Ransome's eyes did. The bronc-buster was sure stirred up now and his eyes had the hard bright shine of glass chips lying in the sun.

Jay's papa had a struggle with himself, but he stopped. He stared at Sis' fellow and his chin went to quivering.

"You sneaking, underhanded scoun'el!" he raged. "Shining up to my Sis and then beating the life out of my baby boy!" His eyes blazed and he started hopping up and down. "I'll go get my gun!" he yelled. "I'll go get my Winchester and plant a ball between your eyes the first time you ride into my sights!"

Jay lay in the dirt, listening to all this and howling louder every second. Ransome looked down at him and then back up at Jay's papa.

"You go get that Winchester, little man," he said. "Me—I've got a loose saddle to catch."

Ransome dropped the harness hame on the ground. He turned his back on Jay's papa and his mesquite club. He went dragging his long-shanked spurs up the trail, reaching back now and then to yank a prickly-pear sticker out of his hind side. He was headed for his bronc, which had stepped inside the loop of his hackamore rope and ground-tied himself.

Jay's papa turned and ran then. He ran toward the house. He cried and he cussed as he ran, hollering for his woman to fetch him his Winchester.

Sis met him halfway to the corn-crib. Sis was crying, too. She caught him by one arm and swung onto it, begging him not to shoot her fellow. Jay's mama came running out of the house and tied onto his other arm. Between them, they stopped Jay's papa before he could get his hands on his Winchester.

Ransome never looked back. He walked up to the snorting bronc. He lifted its foot out of the hackamore rope. The black fell back, pawing the air; but Ransome just stuck a boot into a stirrup and went on up anyhow. Same as if he didn't give a damn. And I guess he didn't, judging from the ride he made. That black all but tied himself up in hard knots, trying to throw him again. But Ransome just stood off in his left stirrup and kicked the black in the belly with his other foot till the animal threw up his tail and decided to call it quits.

I never saw such reckless riding. But Jay, who'd got up and shut off his howling the second his papa left, he acted like that ride didn't amount to much.

"He needn't start showing off now," he sneered. "We know he can be throwed. We seen it happen!"

Then he threw back his head and laughed and laughed—like it was all the biggest kind of a joke.

Sometimes it was hard to figure out my friend Jay.

Jay's mama did a lot of talking to her man in the next few days. She tried to convince him he was about to do Sis a big wrong. She said just because Sis' fellow had lost his temper and given Jay a thrashing, that didn't make it a killing matter.

"That wretched Jay," she said, "he had a good spanking coming."

"Not from no Bard, he didn't," Jay's papa declared. "Them high-handed Bards, they like to think they're the big turtles in any puddle. They like to run rough-shod over common folks. They got smoked out of them hills of Tennessee for trying to lord it over all creation and they can get run out of Texas for the same thing!"

Jay's mama scoffed. "That's all talk your daddy handed you," she said. "Just because back there in Tennessee one time a Bard stole a hog or a woman or something belonging to a Farr. I don't see the good of dragging an old family grudge like that all the way to Texas. Where's Sis going to get her another fine-looking fellow like Ransome, I'd like to know?"

That made Jay's papa's face turn black. He stood up and pounded the kitchen table with his fist, setting the dishes to bouncing and rattling. "Fine-looking!" he stormed. "Now ain't that womenfolks for you? See a bunch of fancy trappings and go blind as a bull-bat in the sun. Hang tassels on a jackass, and they think he's a race-horse! I tell you, a man who'll beat up on a pore little old defenseless baby boy, he'll just as quick drag a fine girl down into sin and disgrace. You can depend on that.

"And you can depend on this, too," he added, whamming the table again. "Ike Farr's got the sense and the gall to keep a black-hearted scoun'el like that drove from his door!"

Jay's mama tried hard, but she couldn't change her man's mind. He aimed to plant a ball between Ransome's eyes any time that fancy-rigged scissorbill rode within gun range.

JAY'S big sister Sis stayed out of the arguments. All she did was prowl around the house, quiet as a shadow, looking peaked and sad, ready to go off and cry in her cooking apron any time her papa mentioned shooting her fellow out of that rosebud saddle.

I made certain Jay's papa would take our slingshots away from us, but he didn't. We went right ahead with our rabbit-hunting and snake-killing and knocking wasps nests out of trees.

It was plenty of fun, all right, but that run-in Jay's papa'd had with Sis' fellow kept bothering me. I felt sorry for Sis. I didn't want Ransome killed and I didn't want Jay's papa to do the killing. I wished Jay never had thought up hitting that bronc with a rock. I wished everything was back like it was, with Ransome's wild horses stomping out holes around the front-yard gate while he sat on the front gallery and spun his spur rowels with his finger and courted Sis. I missed Ransome, bad. Especially his pretty cowhand garments and saddle rigging.

It wasn't long, though, till I got to missing Sis, too—from the house. Sometimes she'd be gone for hours. And I noticed that when she was around, the color was back in her face and she was able to eat well and regular again.

Jay's papa took note of that, too. He spoke to his woman about it, real pleased. "Our girl Sis ain't nobody's fool," he told Jay's mama. "She's seen how right I am and is content to let that bronc-twister peddle his goods some place else!"

Jay's mama let him talk, but didn't answer.

It didn't seem quite right to me for Sis to forget her fellow so quick. And about a week later, I learned that she hadn't forgot him at all.

That was the day Jay's papa caught me and Jay naked and having us a mud fight out in the middle of the scummy old dirt cattle tank that was just about dried up. Jay's papa told us to get right out of that filthy place and stay out.

"And don't let me catch you all going off to that old baptizing hole down on Yellow Wolf, either," he warned. "That's a deep, dangerous hole. Parson Shaffer come within an ace of letting a back-slider drown there last year, trying to wash away his sinning."

So, after dinner that day, Jay and I sneaked off to see how deep and dangerous that old baptizing hole was.

It was a big wide pot-hole just below a sand-rock ledge that crossed Yellow Wolf

Creek. The flood rises poured over the ledge and kept the hole washed out deep in the sand. There was a high dirt bank on the north side, with pole elms and live-oaks growing on top and a seep spring coming out from under their roots. The seep spring fed the pool and kept it full, even in the driest times.

We approached from the south bank, where it was low and grassy. And that's where we found Jay's big sister Sis, all cuddled up in a tight hug with Ransome Bard. A bronc horse of Ransome's cropped grass close by, with Ransome holding him on a long picket rope.

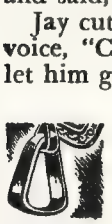
Sis was all pinked-up and saying, "But, Ransome, I do. It's just that I don't know what to do about Papa. It'd break Papa's heart for us to run off!"

I couldn't hear what Ransome said, but it made Sis come suddenly to her knees an shake a finger in his face.

"Now you hush that kind of talk," she quarreled at him. "I know Papa's hot-headed. Just like you. You're both high-handed and touchy as teased snakes. That's why we're in this fix!"

She broke off to wheel and look straight at me and Jay. I don't know how she knew we were there, but she caught us right out in the broad open. She jumped up and said, "Oh, my goodness, it's Jay!"

Jay cut to run, and Sis said in a scared voice, "Catch him, Ransome. Don't ever let him get to Papa with this!"



JAY took to the brush like a scared rabbit. I skinned out after him. But it was no use. In a minute, we heard brush popping behind us and the sound of horse's hoofs, running hard. Here came Ransome, spurring past me. He leaned down off his bronc and grabbed Jay by the seat of his pants. He lifted him, squalling and kicking, and laid him across his saddle. Like he'd pack a dogie calf. He rode back toward Sis, laughing at the fight Jay put up to get loose.

I followed Ransome. Ransome dumped Jay to the ground in front of Sis and sat in his saddle and let Jay glare up at him.

"Jay, please!" Sis begged. "You mustn't tell Papa!"

"Why?" Jay wanted to know.

"Why—" Sis said. "Why, because Papa might shoot Ransome!"

"*Might!*" Jay snorted. "You *know* he'll shoot him!"

Sis' eyes got wide and round and her breath came hard. "But Jay!" she cried out. "Don't you care?"

Jay grunted. "It don't make me no never-mind what Papa shoots," he said.

He looked up at Ransome. I guess, to see how he'd take that. But Ransome was licking a cigarette and studying the tops of the trees.

Sis stamped a foot. "Now you listen to me, Jay Farr!" she said.

Jay grinned that grin again. "All right," he said, cool as a cucumber. "What do I get out of it?"

Sis' blue eyes blazed; then the fire died. "I might have known how it would be," she sighed. "What do you want?"

Jay wrinkled his forehead, thinking hard. "Well," he said, "I'm getting awful tired of slopping Papa's meat hogs so regular."

"I'll slop the hogs!" Sis agreed.

"And we don't git half enough sugar muffins to eat."

"I'll make all the muffins we've got sugar for!"

"Then I'm needing some money," added Jay, "for a .22 target gun and about five boxes of hulls. And I could use an agate taw marble, too, and one of them soft ropes for loop-spinning and a carbide head lamp."

Sis looked panicky. "But I can't!" she said. "Where would I get money for all those things?"

Jay jerked a thumb at Ransome. "He's got money," he said. "Been breaking horses, steady, all year long."

Sis turned a sort of hopeless look up toward her fellow.

Ransome studied the burning end of his cigarette a little bit and grinned. "Best I can figure it up," he said, "it'd be a danged sight cheaper to run off, just like I wanted."

Sis' face turned white and her bottom lip started quivering.

Ransome quit his saddle to come slip an arm around her. "Now, don't do that, honey," he begged. "I was just hoorawing. I'll foot the bill; you slop the hogs and bake the muffins. We'll make out all right till your daddy sees different."

"We'll make out," Jay said, "if you're here with that money tomorrow." He

squinted up at the sun. "Right about this time of day."

"I'll be here," Ransome promised.

That satisfied Jay, so he started shucking out of his clothes, right there in front of them, ready to go swimming. Sis turned red in the face and headed for the brush, with Ransome following and leading his horse.

"I could kill him!" Sis told Ransome. "I could just murder him!"

"Hush, honey," Ransome told her. "That sounds too much like the way your papa talks."

We sure had it fine the rest of the summer, Jay and I did. What with a new target gun and plenty of hulls and new ropes and all the sugar muffins we could stuff down. We could splash around in that old baptizing hole and never have to hurry back to slop the hogs. The way it looked to me, my friend Jay had played it smart.

No telling how long our fun would have lasted if it hadn't been a dry year. But it kept getting drier and drier and finally never did rain. The crops burned up; the water in the cattle tank disappeared; finally, the well got so low that Jay's papa started hauling drinking water from the baptizing hole.

Jay and I went with him on the second trip. We helped hook up the work mules and load on three big whiskey barrels Jay's papa had swapped for from a saloon man in town. Jay tried to take the .22 target gun along, but his papa put his foot down.

"Think I want a couple of hair-brained young'uns monkeying with a gun behind my back?" he said.

But he didn't tell us to leave our slingshots, so we filled our pockets with rocks and ran and climbed into the back end of the wagon as he drove out of the feed lots. We tried to ride the jostling wagon and kill rabbits and chaparrals and things, but we didn't have much luck.

WE WERE getting close to the water hole when Jay suddenly pointed and said, "Looky yonder!" I looked. And up, just ahead of the mules, was a nest of yellow wasps hanging in a turkey-pear bush. That nest was big as a Mexican's hat and had a million wasps clinging to it.

"Watch me cut it down!" Jay said.

I knew better, but there was no use talking to Jay. Jay never would listen. He waited till the wagon pulled up beside the nest, then let fly.

His aim was perfect. Down tumbled the nest.

And up rose a yellow cloud of wasps, the maddest you ever saw.

They swarmed over us so fast there wasn't even time to think what to do. You never felt hotter stingers than they slapped into our hides!

Jay's papa jumped to his feet and hollered "Goddlemighty!" and went to fighting wasps with both hands. Then the mules jumped and jerked the wagon and threw me down and I heard Jay's papa holler, "Whoa, mules! Whoa, now!"

But the mules wouldn't. I got to my knees in time to see them rearing and plunging and wringing their tails and each trying to go off in a different direction at once. Then they got together on it, the mules did, and quit the road.

And here we went yonder!

The wagon bounced and crashed and tore through the brush. It rode down big pole saplings that splintered and cracked beneath us. We fought wasps and howled, while dead wood popped and sticks and leaves and trash whizzed through the air.

It sure was a wild ride. One wheel hit a big boulder. It pitched the wagon high and knocked me down again, just in time for a barrel to bounce clean over me and out of the wagon.

When I got to my all-fours this time, Jay and two whiskey barrels were gone.

I thought the runaway would never stop. But it did—when the mules ran right off that high dirt bank and jumped head-first into the baptizing hole. They took the wagon with them, and I don't know how to tell what it felt like, riding that wagon down through the air.

The mules hit first and went under. The wagon crashed right down on top of them. Then a big splash of water stung my face, blinding me. And I knew for sure I was drowning.

But when the water cleared away, it wasn't me drowning—it was Jay's papa. He was overboard, splashing and hollering for help and grabbing at the sideboard.

I reached out and put his hand on the sideboard and he pulled himself in. And

when I looked up, there went the mules, climbing out on the far bank.

But they weren't taking us out with them. All they were hooked to now was the wagon's running gear, which had sunk from under us.

And there we were—me and Jay's papa—floating around in a loose wagon bed, out in the middle of that deep, dangerous baptizing hole. Same as in a boat!

Only, it wasn't exactly the same, either, because a boat holds water. And all around the edges and up between the boards of the wagon bed, the water was coming in. Not fast, but it was coming in.

Jay's papa stood and dripped and stared pop-eyed at the mules that had tangled their harness in some brush. The mules were snorting and pawing and dripping, too.

Suddenly, Jay's papa wheeled and gripped my shoulder till it hurt. "Jay!" he hollered in a wild voice. "Where's my baby boy Jay?"

I shook my head; I wasn't up to talking yet.

Jay's papa ran to the back end of the wagon bed, making the front end rise. He bent over and tried to look down into that deep water. "My pore little baby boy," he moaned. "Drownded in a baptizing hole!"

My breath finally came and I said, "He's back yonder somewhere. He's not in the water!"

Jay's papa stared at me like he couldn't understand. "He's back yonder!" I said again. "Him and the wasps!"

"Praise the Almighty!" Jay's papa said. "My baby boy is saved!"

He looked down and saw the water bubbling up through the floor boards. He shook his head, sad-like. "We're sinking, son," he said. "Pray, if you can. Thank the Lord my baby boy is saved from this watery grave!"

I NEVER had been much strong on praying and right then I'd just as soon it was Jay who was fixing to drown, instead of me. This was all Jay's fault, the way I looked at it, and it didn't seem quite fair for Jay to get off free. I felt tears stinging my eyes; I sure did hate to have to drown.

Then I heard brush popping and dragging against saddle leather. I looked up and my heart went to jumping with hope. It was Ransome Bard, riding around the pool to the low side.

Ransome would save us! He wouldn't let us drown!

But Ransome didn't get at saving us in much of a hurry. He just rode up to the edge of the water and lifted a leg to crook it around his saddle horn. Then he grinned at us and started rolling a cigarette.

Jay's papa went to jumping up and down, making the water splash in the wagon bed. "Well, confound it!" he shouted. "Don't set there grinning like a briar-eating mule! Do something! Get us out of here!"

Ransome lit his cigarette and lifted one eyebrow. "I'd rather dicker a little first," he said.

Jay's papa's mouth fell open. Then his face got black. "Dicker!" he roared. "With the lives of a man and boy at stake? Why, if I had my old Winchester, I'd—"

"Sure, I know," Ransome put in. "You'd plant a ball right between my eyes. But you ain't got it, and that wagon bed's filling fast."

Jay's papa stood stock still while the water bubbled up around his feet. He coudn't even say a cuss word. I tried to get ready to drown, but I didn't know how you did it.

Then Jay's papa's chin started shaking. "All right, dang it!" he said. "You win. I'll forget the shooting."

"Well, now that's fine," Ransome said. "But how about me and Sis? We're sort of bent on a Thanksgiving wedding."

"Wedding!" screamed Jay's papa, beating the air with his fists. "I'll drown first. I'll—"

Then he slumped and looked around at me. "No," he said, shaking his head, "that won't do. I can't let my wants cost the life of my baby boy's little friend here!"

Ransome said, "Now, don't let Hop's safety influence your decision none. Hop can swim out any time he takes a notion. Him and your baby boy, they've been swimming in this hole all summer."

A grasshopper could have kicked me out of that wagon bed right then. What with all the scare I'd had, I'd clean forgot about learning to swim!

Jay's papa was jumping up and down

(Continued on page 144)

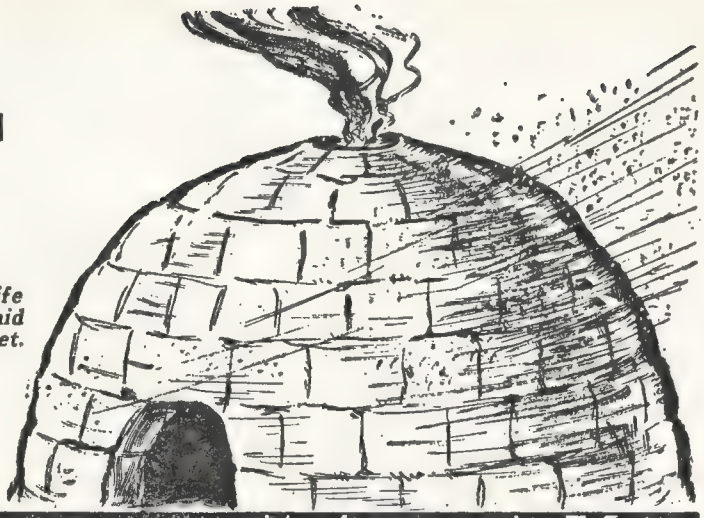
ESKIMO NO CRY

THE files of the Royal Commissioner for Marine of the District of Keewatin, June through September, relate to such necessary matters as cargo warrants, vessel clearances, declarations, claims, insurance and the interim specifications of Lloyd's Register. Tucked in among them may be an occasional enlivening account of a case in barratry, or terse mention of some adventurous expedition for salvage. Even these rarities, however, are presented in bare and cryptic form. Sufficing for their immediate purposes, they yield little satisfaction to the curious.

By contrast, during the frozen months the Royal Commissioner requires members of his staff in permanent situations along Hudson's Bay to provide quite explicit and complete information, when an affair however trivial arouses his personal at-

ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

By
HOWARD
STEPHENSON



Johnny flipped a hunting knife in the direction of Dake, said knife penetrating his jacket.

tention. The difficulty imposed on these incumbents is a considerable one. Having spent part of the year confining reports to skeletal dimensions, they then are obliged to go into the most tenuous detail, which in the shipping season would scarce justify expenditure of precious time and paper.

An example is that file which concerns the misadventure of Johnny Voici of the *Freezin' Fanny*. It reflects the inability of the Master of Harbour at Fort Hill, old Pop Keith, to drop the language of his ordinary reports, drawing down the caustic comments of his superior. It deals with a matter not worth a chit in a mailbag on the great *Nascopie* on her annual voyage touching at the port. Yet a sizable sheaf of correspondence reports is devoted to Johnny, a person of no more public consequence than his little craft.

Just the same, Johnny is worth acquaintance and so is Pop Keith. The official reports from Fort Hill for the past winter season follow:

3 Oct.

Sir:

The undersigned begs leave to report that the Harbour at Fort Hill was officially closed to navigation on this date. All buoys have been retrieved from the channel and beached. All stays, bumper piling and other dock equipment have been made fast for the winter. All lines, cables and other ropes have been coiled and stowed in the Dock House. Windows of said Dock House have been covered with double thicknesses of tar paper and boarded up.

The Harbour premises are now shipshape, with the exception of one peterhead boat, the *Freezin' Fanny*, formerly the property of the American Army and now duly registered at this port, J. Voici, Master and Owner.

On promise and warranty of said Voici to remove said boat from the Harbour slip within three days, verbal permission was extended to keep her tied up on his own liability. The reason for this permission is that said *Freezin' Fanny* provides the sole means of transport of said Voici from this Harbour to his home on the Tavanni River, said Voici being a registered trapper and native of the Northwest Territories, and compulsion to remove the said *Freezin' Fanny* this day would cause hardship and financial loss to said Voici.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

10 Oct.

Sir:

The undersigned begs leave to report that the *Freezin' Fanny* is still tied up in the slip. Seeing nothing in Regulations to cover the circumstances of her remaining here, the undersigned on the 4th inst. ordered her new owner, K. Dake, to remove her within three days under penalty. Said Dake having failed to comply, and the *Freezin' Fanny* being a potential menace to navigation, notice issued to said K. Dake that unless such removal is made on or before the opening of navigation, the vessel will be impounded as the King's prize and seizure made. This Harbour is now frozen over.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

17 Oct.

Sir:

On receipt of your orders to do nothing rash in the matter of the *Freezin' Fanny*, the undersigned begs to report that nothing rash is contemplated. As per your request for explanation of the circumstances under which change of ownership took place, and just to tell it in my own words and never mind the bureaucratic verbal hogwash, by which you are understood to mean just to tell it in my words, said explanation follows:

Johnny Voici, sir, is part Eskimo and part French. He has been known to the un-

dersigned for the period of the past three years, having first reached this Harbour in the company of Cheve Gutar and party from the Tavanni River district. During the late war, the American Army had made request for a number of Eskimos to assist in training dogs for transport purposes connected with building the air strip at Fort Hill. Johnny was the best of Cheve Gutar's Eskimos.

On completion of this duty, which said Johnny performed in an exemplary manner, he remained at Fort Hill in the capacity of mess boy at the air strip, in the employ of the American Army. On conclusion of hostilities and the imminence of withdrawal of American troops from Fort Hill, he was asked by the Officer Commanding what it was he desired most. Johnny replied that it was to marry Nara, the daughter of Cheve Gutar. Much amusement was displayed by the American officers present.

When asked what else he most wished for, Johnny replied that it was a peterhead boat. The Officer Commanding had received orders to dispose of surplus property not suitable for removal, among said property being the peterhead boat *Freezin' Fanny* which has given rise to the present circumstances. The *Freezin' Fanny* was formally transferred to said Johnny on payment of five dollars, said payment being provided by the Officer Commanding.

Johnny proceeded via the *Freezin' Fanny* to his home on the Tavanni River, where he married Nara, the daughter of Cheve Gutar and engaged in his profession as trapper. He returned in the *Freezin' Fanny* on October 1 of this year and duly reported his arrival at this Dock Office. Johnny disclosed on arrival that he was an expectant father. He had come to Fort Hill for the purpose of purchasing suitable supplies and clothing for the infant and expressed himself as being the happiest man on Hudson's Bay.

Unfortunately Johnny is possessed, sir, of a very friendly disposition. He is a rather short but muscular laddie, round-faced and always smiling. He had been disciplined but once during his service as a civilian employe of the American Army. On that occasion he was reprimanded for engaging in a game of cards known as Red Dog. It was this same Red Dog which brought about the present circumstances involving the *Freezin' Fanny*.

The undersigned was engaged, after hours, sir, in a game of Red Dog in the shanty or cabin of K. Dake, a notorious person who is more of a bully than a trader, although very successful at the latter occupation. Dake conducts a thoroughly dishonest gambling den in his shanty, which the undersigned regrets to say is frequented by many otherwise respectable persons, other means of entertainment at Fort Hill being lacking, with the excepton of the splendid motion pictures which were shown during the occupation of the American troops but which unfortunately are no longer available.

The undersigned, suspecting that Dake was dealing cards from the bottom of the deck, which is a dishonest practice, sir, laid an automatic pistol on the table and demanded that the game be played in accordance with the rules of Hoyle. No further trouble ensued. Soon thereafter Johnny appeared at the shanty and on being warmly greeted by a number of his friends, took a place in the game. He won three pots.

At 2 A.M., feeling sleepy, the undersigned absented himself and his automatic pistol from the game for the space of three hours. On his return, loud voices were heard in the shanty and upon entering it was plain that an argument had arisen. The only persons still present were Johnny, Dake and two of Dake's evil companions.

"I see you," Johnny said, pointing at Dake. "You cheat!" He was smiling as ordinarily. Dake, who is a powerful man, reached over the table in a menacing manner. Johnny struck him forcibly on the nose, whereupon blood spurted forth. The two evil companions of Dake were closing in on Johnny, but the undersigned produced his automatic pistol and order was restored.

Dake exhibited a number of slips of paper on which the inscription "I.O.U." appeared, together with the initials "J.V."

"You stay out of this, Pop," Dake said, using the designation by which the under-

signed is known to most of the inhabitants of this Harbour and environs. "I've got his I.O.U.'s for the value of that damned boat and I'm gonna take 'er. You kin cry all you want to, you damn husky, but I've got your I.O.U's."

"Eskimo no cry," Johnny replied, pride in his voice. This is a true observation, sir. It is a well-known fact that the Eskimo is protected by nature with tear glands which do not readily function. The undersigned has never known an Eskimo to cry. In describing himself as an Eskimo, Johnny chose to ignore that his lineage includes a French grandfather, whose surname he bears. The epithet "husky," used by Dake, is a slur which few whites care to make upon an Eskimo face to face, as it is well-known that this is usually applied not to the Eskimo but to his dogs. Johnny's habitual smile had disappeared but it was shortly in evidence again, although his manner was not now joyful.

"Is true," he said. "I sign paper. Dake own boat. Maybe I borrow boat, go back see Nara, maybe see papoose."

Dake shoved the paper slips into his pocket and sat down.

"I'm not lending my boat just now," he said. "If you want her, you pay for her —furs to the value of eight hundred dollars."

"Pay?" Johnny looked at the undersigned. "How pay?"

Strictly in an unofficial capacity, sir, the undersigned advised Johnny that the only way to pay for the boat was to go out and shoot a few pelts. This Johnny decided to do and we left. On the following day, though against his personal wishes, the undersigned felt required by the duties of office as Master of Harbour to acknowledge the transfer of the *Freezin' Fanny* from J. Voici to K. Dake. The consideration or price was stated as eight hundred dollars.

This, sir, briefly explains the reason for the change in ownership.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

4 Nov.

Sir:

There was deposited at this Dock Office on this date one bundle of peltries, consisting of 1 lynx, 2 wolf, 1 king wolf, 1 bear, 42 muskrat and 14 siksik skins, for winter storage, to the account of J. Voici.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

20 Nov.

Sir:

The theft of one 30-30 rifle was reported at this Dock Office by J. Voici, late Master and Owner of the *Freezin' Fanny*. There was deposited one bundle of peltries, consisting of 60 muskrat and 30 siksik skins, for winter storage, to the account of J. Voici.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour

22 Dec.

Sir:

There was deposited at this Dock Office on this date one bundle of peltries, consisting of 105 muskrat and 10 siksik skins, for winter storage, to the account of J. Voici.

On receipt of your orders to provide details on the progress of J. Voici in his attempt to buy back the *Freezin' Fanny* and to cut out the bureaucratic verbal hogwash once and for all, by which you are understood to mean provide details, the undersigned begs to report as follows:

Dake is a crook and no mistake, sir. Without a gun, Johnny is only able to trap muskrat and siksiks. It is a little early for beaver. Johnny refused to shoot the caribou at the old air strip, and the next day his rifle was missing. The undersigned is sure

that Dake or one of his men took it, but there is no proof. Things have come to a pretty pass in the North, sir, if a man cannot leave his igloo in the assurance that his personal belongings will be safe.

Wishing you the compliments of the season, sir.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

31 Jan.

Sir:

On receipt of your order to say what in blazes is meant by the reference to caribou and igloo in the previous report the undersigned begs to report as follows:

The reference to the igloo was to the snow house or hut which Johnny erected at the old air strip. Most of the buildings have either been blown down or removed. Johnny lives in the igloo and as he is of partial Eskimo extraction the undersigned had thought this not important enough to report on. He eats off the land and had begun to pile up a respectable number of peltries.

On the night of the 28th inst., Johnny returned to his home, to find it in ruins. The igloo had been demolished. He discovered that a certain caribou, which had frequented the vicinity of the air strip while the American airmen were there, had returned. While it is perhaps difficult to understand how Johnny knew it was the same caribou, he had no doubt of it. The caribou made its presence known by completely wrecking Johnny's igloo, in subzero weather.

Instead of becoming angered, Johnny was smiling happily when he came to this Dock House the following morning. He recounted that he had built a new igloo and was now completely installed in it. When asked whether he had shot the caribou, the hide of which would have been his richest haul since he got the bear, he was amazed.

"No shoot. Yanks like caribou. Johnny like caribou. Caribou like Johnny, too," he replied. It was well-known to the undersigned that when the Americans were at the air strip, it was their custom to entice a certain caribou to the mess hall (which they customarily referred to as the garbage dump) by means of providing it with food, usually a particular variety of tinned meat. Though it would be an exaggeration to say the caribou had become tame, the undersigned has seen it take food from a mess kit.

No amount of argument would induce Johnny to sacrifice this animal, which he could have got with ease, although its skin would have been a welcome addition to his pile of peltries.

Later the same evening, Johnny reported that his new igloo had been entered and his rifle, which provided his principal means of livelihood, was not there, where he had left it, carefully wrapped in siksik skins. As is well-known to you, sir, theft is a serious crime. The undersigned proceeded at once in company with Johnny to the site of his igloo.

By good fortune the northern lights were on full display and if a personal observation may be permitted, the view afforded by these lights, from the top of the bluff where the air strip was built, is one of the finest examples of nature's handiwork seen to date by the undersigned.

The line of the Harbour contour is lost; land and sea—or that division of the sea which is Hudson's Bay—are united under a peaceful white splendor. White is not white in the North, sir, but has a hundred shades of its own. Under the colourful gleaming of the restless lights, the whiteness is pervading, it is true, but against it dances a succession of rainbow colours which transform bluffside and Harbour into a magic place where the natural seems unreal and vice versa. The northern lights also gave us the advantage of showing the way without the use of an electric torch.

Upon examination of the igloo, the undersigned determined that Johnny had not been mistaken in believing that his rifle was gone. Mukluk tracks on the powdery snow which had dusted down over the snow crust indicated that a person other than Johnny had visited the place. Spoor of caribou also were visible and on being followed,

led straight to the snugly built small frame building which alone remains standing in this section of the air strip, being protected from wind and drifts by the bend of the bluff.

Evidence of damage to the door and side of the building were examined, and it was discovered that the caribou had broken down a section of the board wall and had entered the small building. It was further discovered that the caribou was now within the small building, eating a mattress which was among the articles which had been left there in storage.

The building and its contents being the property of our late courageous Allies, the undersigned took it as a dutiful act to attempt to dispatch the caribou. Johnny, however, knocked up the automatic pistol which the undersigned had drawn, and holding a long hunting knife in his hand, ferociously forbade the undersigned to kill the animal, which he termed his friend. The result was a series of small punctures in the roof of said small building, made by bullets from the automatic pistol.

Upon agreement to comply, Johnny invited the undersigned in the most friendly fashion to accompany him to the igloo, where he lighted a small primus stove which the undersigned had given to him previously, and brewed a pot of tea. Although the temperature without was in the nature of 40 degrees below zero, the interior of the igloo was fairly snug and we sat on two old petrol tins and considered how to proceed in the circumstances.

The undersigned advised Johnny that since the small building had been breached no charge could be laid against him for breaking and entering and he ought therefore to make the small building his home, after chasing the caribou out. Johnny declined, however. The Officer Commanding had informed him at one time that this small building belonged to the Hospital Unit of the air strip, and Johnny had a belief that anything connected with a hospital meant illness. He refused to enter it.

On the subject of the rifle it was impossible to reach any immediate conclusion. When the undersigned urged Johnny to come and live at the Dock House quarters until a new rifle could be procured, Johnny stubbornly refused.

"Eskimo no cry," he said, a phrase which did not seem appropriate to the undersigned, since Johnny had not been accused of crying. He also declined the offer of the loan of a new rifle, when procured.

"Maybe Johnny die now," he said, his friendly smile ill befitting the grim words.

"No, Johnny!" the undersigned stated. "Think of Nara. Think of that papoose."

"Pop," Johnny said, "Johnny think on Nara all day. Think on Nara all night, too. Not think on papoose too much. Think on papoose too much, that make Johnny kill Dake." His face was lighted with a somewhat wistful smile.

Murder, sir, is an even more serious crime than theft. The undersigned therefore induced Johnny to promise not to kill Dake.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

21 March

Sir:

The undersigned begs to report that the Royal Mail Service has been interrupted by severe storms of hurricane force. The dog-team arrived at the Harbour on this date with the mail and the dogs are at present eating a seal which the undersigned was so fortunate as to shoot with his automatic pistol on the ice. The skin of said seal has been added to the winter storage account of J. Voici.

The undersigned wishes to express his appreciation of the radio message broadcast on the Northern Messenger program on the 19th inst., to the effect that Repulse Bay reported that Constable Straight of the R.C.M.P. had visited the camps on the Tavanni River and that the daughter of Cheve Gutar has given birth to a son. It is impossible at present, sir, to pass this information on to J.Voici, whose whereabouts are unknown to the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

4 May

Sir:

In the matter of the release of the vessel *Freezin' Fanny,* now frozen in at slipside without permission, it is the intent of the undersigned to seize said *Freezin' Fanny* on the date of the opening of coastwise navigation, which it is anticipated will be within the month.

The Owner, K. Dake, has made inquiry as to his rights of ownership and has been informed that the vessel will be impounded. No clearance will issue until the vessel is completely equipped as she was on entering this Harbour, namely, with one 30-30 rifle now found missing from her stores, upon inspection.

Dake may have the rights of this, sir, since said rifle was removed from the vessel by her late owner, J. Voici, but Dake is a thief and the undersigned means some measure of justice to be done.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

20 May

Sir:

Not having received contrary orders, the undersigned was prepared to proceed with the seizure of the vessel *Freezin' Fanny* if necessary. However, this step may now be avoided, J. Voici having appeared at this Dock Office on the 19th inst.

If the liberty may be taken of discussing in detail the circumstances surrounding his return, which have bearing on the release of the *Freezin' Fanny,* they were as follows:

Johnny returned to his igloo on the 18th inst., pulling a sledge on which he had bound three large bales of peltries. He had procured a large number of small animals, including 6 beaver and 11 ermine weasels, very valuable, by setting primitive snares made of baling wire. He then contrived a chute or slide down the side of the bluff and to protect his valuable catch, rode the sledge with them down the slide.

The descent is extremely steep. At the bottom, in the vicinity of the abutment of the Harbour slip, the sled was overturned and Johnny was thrown, severely wrenching his ankle. He managed however to crawl to this Dock Office and upon admission, his ankle was properly bound and attended to.

It then devolved upon the undersigned to evaluate the entire winter's catch which Johnny had made, including the items already in storage. The sum represented lacked only a few dollars of the evaluation of the *Freezin' Fanny,* which lack the undersigned estimated was precisely equal to the legal value of one caribou hide.

Upon persuasion by the undersigned, Johnny consented at last to the death of the caribou, which had already done considerable damage to property by breaking and entering into the small building on the air strip. On the following day Johnny was able to limp about. He was given an automatic pistol by the undersigned and went up the bluff to the air strip. Johnny was sustained in his determination by the news imparted to him that he was now the father of a son, and thus more responsible to said son than to a dumb beast.

On reaching the small building at the air strip, Johnny discovered that the caribou had eaten its way through most of the stores and furnishings placed therein and there was a great litter of crates and tins and bottles which the animal had broken uselessly. Entering the small building, Johnny was repelled by a strong smell which he later described as the smell of a hospital. He therefore waited outside for the caribou to emerge. When it failed to do so after several hours, Johnny entered into the small house, automatic pistol in hand, much against his will.

The caribou was lying on its side, legs stiff and eyes closed. Thankful that he had been spared the necessity of dispatching the caribou, Johnny put away the automatic pistol and took a hunting knife in his hand, prepared to strip the animal of its hide. Johnny was about to begin his task, but his still-painful ankle, the distasteful strong smell and the realization that he was parting with a friend combined to weaken him and a slow drowsiness overcame him. He sank beside the caribou, and fell asleep.

While asleep Johnny dreamed of a method of delivering the caribou without the necessity of stripping it of its hide. On awakening much later, he bound the legs of the caribou with baling wire. Despite a severe headache, with great strength and fortitude he succeeded in sliding the animal out of the small building and onto the chute or slide which he had contrived.

Johnny prepared a skid for the body. He sat upon the caribou and rode it down the steep descent, at grave risk of further accident. Upon Johnny's arrival at this Dock Office, the undersigned summoned K. Dake. In the presence of the undersigned, Johnny made offer of peltries to the value of 801 dollars, in payment for the vessel *Freezin' Fanny*.

Dake was informed by the undersigned that he had better live up to his agreement and accept this payment. Dake demanded that the caribou be stripped of its hide. Smiling eagerly, Johnny informed him that if he did not accept the caribou as delivered, he, Johnny, would thrust his hunting knife into the belly of K. Dake.

Dake thereupon replied that he accepted the caribou and in the presence of the undersigned, Dake took possession of the peltries and signed a formal transfer of the vessel *Freezin' Fanny* to J. Voici.

Dake then left. In his absence, the undersigned, who had detected a strong smell of ether arising from the body of the caribou, observed that one eye of said caribou was now open. The beast was evidently still alive. Johnny unfastened the baling wire from the legs of the caribou, which stood shakily upon its feet. Dake reappeared a few minutes later, in company with his two evil companions. Dake carried a rifle, which he raised and leveled at the head of the caribou.

Johnny, who was patting the flank of the beast, flipped or threw a hunting knife in the direction of Dake, said knife penetrating the jacket of said Dake and causing him to fire over the head of the caribou and also of Johnny. The caribou shook itself mightily and in a frightened manner ran swiftly off the dock and in the general direction of the air strip. The animal was seen ascending the bluffside at approximately the same speed as it had descended a short time before.

The evil companions of Dake began to close in on Johnny. The undersigned produced his automatic pistol and ordered them to halt, whereupon order was restored.

Johnny made demand upon said Dake for one 30-30 rifle, which Dake held in his hand. Johnny claimed that this was the very rifle which had been removed from his igloo. The undersigned, whose automatic pistol still had the situation under control, examined said rifle and discovered the initials "J.V." cut in the stock of said rifle. The undersigned returned said rifle to its lawful owner. Dake was discovered to be shedding blood from a severe wound in the shoulder. He and his evil companions then left.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

2 June

Sir:

Navigation was opened at this Harbour on this date. In the matter of the vessel *Freezin' Fanny*, J. Voici, Master and Owner, clearance issued on this date for said craft, bound for the Tavanni River. Constable Straight of the R.C.M.P. having arrived on extraordinary patrol, K. Dake was placed under arrest, charges of extortion, conducting a gambling establishment and theft of a rifle being laid against him. He was placed in temporary custody of the undersigned. Constable Straight desiring to report to Repulse Bay, was signed on as helmsman on the *Freezin' Fanny*. The Master, J. Voici, will run the engine.

Sir, one further matter remains to be explained regarding the *Freezin' Fanny*. There is nothing in Regulations to cover shipment of one live caribou in crate, whether it should be billed as game, pelt or domestic animal. The undersigned has described the beast in clearance papers as one domestic animal, cow.

Respectfully submitted
T. KEITH, Master of Harbour.

He pinched off a thousandth of a gram of O'Doul and salted my drink with it.

ASHES TO ASHES

By

C. P. DONNEL, Jr.

BECAUSE I am a reporter, and because my nose has been thrice broken against the adamantine walls of other people's business, I repair perhaps more frequently than I should to the County Donegal Bar, where with the assistance of Marty Geoghan's choicest Irish I convince myself that I was right in not going into advertising when I had a chance.

I mentioned Geoghan. Marty is the factotum of the Donegal. He is a thick man with brick-red hair to match his complexion; he has a liver which is a pulsing

ILLUSTRATED BY JOSEPH A. FARREN

affront to the power of cirrhosis; his age might be anywhere from an old thirty-five to a young sixty, and his code is never to refuse one as long as it is not an O'Neil cousin putting it on the cuff.

It was a habit, or if you like, idiosyncrasy of Marty's which first stimulated my buds of curiosity. It had to do with his thumb and forefinger. Understand, I am well inured to the practice of putting salt in one's beer.

But the stuff that Marty Geoghan put into his beer—just the tiniest pinch—and into his whiskey and into the Tom-and-Jerry for which at Christmas time the Donegal is famous along Third Avenue, was not salt. It was a grayish, flaky, fluffy substance resembling wood ashes. He kept it in a plain little blue-and-white porcelain urn with a top, not unlike an old-fashioned sugar bowl.

Why Marty performed this rite—and he made a rite of it—a generation of Donegal patrons tried to discover: some subtly, some idly, some loudly and openly, and some, exasperated, threatening with the cocked fist. All were defeated by Marty's silence (he is anything but silent as a rule) and by the cryptic smile served with the silence. Gradually the matter was dropped, save for a few who hint, with the sourness of curiosity unsatisfied, that Marty is attempting to bolster his virility.

I said, all have been defeated. All except me. Just how I worked the can-opener on Marty's reticence is a professional secret. But one August night when there was no one else in the place, Marty, after an elaborate scrutiny of the premises for eavesdroppers, leaned on the dark, damp wood and opened his mouth and his heart.

"Them," he said reverently, motioning toward the sacred niche behind the best Scotch, "is all that is mortal of O'Doul the Lucky."

HE TOOK down the urn and frowned benignly into it. "God rest your soul, O'Doul. There's some left, but there's times when I wish ye had been a bigger man."

I gawked at Marty's eyes. They looked sane enough.

Marty replaced the urn as gently as a mother soothing the brow of a sick child. "O'Doul the Lucky," he said solemnly. "God rest his fortunate soul. Just as he came from the cree-cree-creematorium."

Here something—it was hard to say what—happened to my stomach. I said, with several ulterior motives, "Fill'em up. On me."

Marty poured. Mechanically he reached behind him. Mechanically he dropped the barest flutter of the late O'Doul the Lucky into his glass. The gray flakes floated high on the brown liquid, like duckdown on oil. Marty bent a speculative glance on me. "You look seedy, boy," he said slowly. "Get lucky yerself." And he pinched off a thousandth of a gram of O'Doul and salted my drink with it. "To O'Doul the Lucky," he intoned. Swallowing a lump, I drank rather quickly, fearing the worst. But O'Doul rested easily on my stomach.

"He was a big, grand upstanding man." said Marty reminiscently.

"O'Doul? You knew him well?"

"O'Doul I never saw. I mean Monahan, who I got O'Doul off. O'Doul was Monahan's best friend." He poured himself and me another, and gave them the dust. " 'Twas a Tuesday that was the fortunate day he first come in here. That day he produced this—this urn, and did as ye have seen me do. 'For the stomach?' I said, being nosey. 'No,' Monahan said. 'For my fortunes.'

"The next day——a Wednesday—Monahan was in again, and as he drank he used the—urn. Finally I asked him outright. Monahan made no bones about answering.

" 'The best friend I ever had—O'Doul,' said Monahan. 'And the luckiest man ever to fill a straight twice hand-running. Never a horse he bet on that did not place. Never a hand of pinochle that O'Doul was the loser by. Never a girl he set his hat at that did not find his arms, and that willingly and gladly.

" 'And his passing from this earth,' Monahan went on, 'as sweet and painless as a baby's nap, and me, his best friend—he had only a sister in Ballyshannon—to see him off. And just before he joined the angels, O'Doul said, "Monahan, there's something you will do for me. I tell you because I love you. My ashes you are to have. Keep them by you always. Drink to me often, and put a pinch of me in each glass. It is pleasant to think of being

washed away in good poteen. And my luck will be your luck from the day of your first drink. Good-bye, Monahan.' " Marty Geoghan touched a corner of his eyes with the bar rag.

"But how did you get O'Doul off Monahan?" I asked.

"Sudden and unexpected. Monahan and I were having one on the house to O'Doul when in runs a little wizened man. The little man cries, 'Monahan, ye're in!' 'In?' says Monahan. 'Speak up, Gogarty!' 'Yer ticket on the Sweepstakes,' cries this Gogarty. 'They've just called ye at the house. To Ireland ye must go for yer money—thousands—the wealth of Cree-oh-sus!'

"Monahan shuts his eyes. 'O'Doul,' he says, 'my thanks. Ye have done all for me that mortal remains could do for a man. I will no longer strain your bounty.' And he gives the urn to Gogarty and runs out. And later that evening, Gogarty being short for money, I buy O'Doul from Gogarty for twenty dollars. I never seen Monahan or Gogarty again." Marty raised his eyes to the fly-specked ceiling. Once more we drank to O'Doul—and of O'Doul.

"Has it worked for you?" I wanted to know.

"That very night a party from uptown—the men in black and white, and beautiful ladies in those bare gowns—came in. A man tipped me twenty dollars. Within six weeks I won a turkey—thirty pounds it was—in a raffle. The day before Christmas, Jennie Halloran, who I was to wed, jilted me for a motorman. I . . ."

"Then O'Doul failed you."

"So I thought at the time—forgive me, O'Doul, for the slur on you. But I have seen Jennie since. Seven foot wide, she is, with a face like a ham now, and the temper of a bad camel. Have one on the house, boy."

Again I ingested a portion of O'Doul the Lucky. Then two customers came in and I left, musing on O'Doul. A breeze came up and blew a scrap of paper against my pants leg. When I reached down to brush it off, I saw it was green. A ten-dollar bill.

It was the following night that I made the foul journey to Jersey City to catch a middleweight bout. After the fight I stopped at Chris Keegan's Shamrock Bar for a stiffener. Chris—I hadn't seen him in years—told me my money was no good, and poured us each four thick fingers of the best. Then he reached behind the bar and brought out a little blue-and-white porcelain urn.

Chris must have seen my dazed look as he pinched a pinch of gray flakes and sprinkled his drink and mine. "A funny thing," he said. "There was a man in here some time ago named Monahan. It seemed he once had a friend—God rest his soul—called O'Doul the Lucky. Well, the next day he was back, and while we were having one, in rushes a little man named Gogarty and cries, 'Monahan, ye're in . . .' "

I LEFT Chris Keegan's thinking deeply about O'Doul—the Lucky, O'Doul the legend, O'Doul the non-existent, O'Doul the figment of an unscrupulous but fertile imagination. Wood ashes, I supposed. The urns by the dozen, at a dime each. As I stepped off the curb. . .

They told me later that when I was brought into the emergency room I was out of my head. It seemed I was cursing some people named O'Doul and Monahan and Gogarty and Geoghan and Keegan. . .

I am still in the hospital. It was not so much the hole in the street that I stepped in. That merely broke my leg. It was more getting hit by the truck. . .

By rights I should be dead. Yet I am being discharged tomorrow, fully recovered.

I shall look up Monahan. I would like to own one of his Lucky O'Doul urns.

I can afford it easily; that much I have just learned from my lawyer. The municipality settled out of court for $7,500. That, with the $15,000 from the truck's insurance company, plus sick benefits and seven months' back pay from the paper, has rendered me fairly independent. But first I shall visit Marty Geoghan and we will have a tall one to O'Doul.

For three days, Lieutenant Trucchi was tied to a tree, with his hands above his head.

A FACT STORY

ESCAPE TO EL DORADO

By
ALLISON W. BUNKLEY

THE helicopter, a symbol of man's greatest technological advances in the twentieth century, will be used to continue one of man's oldest quests, the search for El Dorado, the fabulously wealthy lost civilization of the Americas. Dating back to the days of Ponce de León and Hernán Cortés, the historic quest has been the object to which many lives were devoted and lost. It has been motivated by such divergent forces as greed, quixo-

ILLUSTRATED BY
ROGER L. THOMAS

tics, and escapism. It continues today with the same aims, the same motives, but new techniques.

In the port of Brindlington, Yorkshire, Captain Claude Robert Spriggs, formerly of the Navy, is preparing an expedition to the Brazilian jungle. Its principal claim to fame and notoriety is its use of the latest methods and equipment, the most prominent of which will be the helicopter. With the aid of such a machine, being able to land in an extremely small clearing, hop from point to point, escape from the ground in case of any danger, this expedition of fourteen men will search through the unknown areas of the Upper Amazon. Their purposes will be two: first, to find the "lost civilization," the long sought El Dorado of South America, and second, to find Colonel H. P. Fawcett, who disappeared over twenty years ago in the same quest.

The "Fawcett Legend" is the twentieth century chapter to the historic search for El Dorado. The Spriggs expedition will be the latest paragraph in that story. It is a story that is interesting for its color, for its adventure, and above all, for its significance as a comment on the history of our age.

IN 1924, the Royal Geographic Society of London, a conservative and level-headed group of scientists, financed an expedition to Matto Grosso in the Brazilian jungle. The purpose of the expedition was to find an ancient lost city. The search was to be headed by Colonel H. P. Fawcett; and taking part in it were to be Jack Fawcett, the colonel's son, and Raleigh Rimmel, an American explorer.

At the time that he set out on this expedition, Fawcett's ideas were not what might be called conventional or even scientific. Ernest Holt, an American who accompanied him on an expedition in 1921, described him as "a victim of hallucinations. . . ." "Under the influence of his intensive philosophical studies, especially of Oriental authors," Fawcett had begun to show signs of abnormalities in his thinking. He was not mad, Holt declared; but his ideas were at least farfetched. "It was during that year [1921] that one could notice Fawcett was suffering from mysticism. His objectives in our expedition seemed more and more fantastic. Actually, we explored much of Northern Brazil in search of a lost city Fawcett thought to be found in the interior." They found no such place, and finally Fawcett decided that it must be on the coast, and the search was given up.

In such a frame of mind, Fawcett and his companions set out once more in 1924. In early 1925, they reached the interior town of Cuiabá, Brazil. After remaining there for a few days, they continued into the jungle, and have not been heard of since. Luis Leduc, former police commissioner in Cuiabá, visited Rio de Janeiro in February, 1928. In an interview with the press, he told of Fawcett visiting him when he passed through the town. The colonel had told him that he intended to live among the Indians and remain in the jungle. "When Colonel Fawcett told me of his intentions to live among the Indians, I advised him to go towards the tribes most separated from civilization, for these would be most friendly." According to Leduc, Fawcett and his son returned to Cuiabá when Jack was taken sick with malaria; but they later went back into the jungle with full intentions of living for an indefinite time with the Indians. Fawcett's last message from beyond Cuiabá read as follows: "Do not count on any more dispatches. It may be possible, but the recent trouble with the Indians makes it precarious." After that there was complete silence. The "Fawcett Legend" had begun.

Colonel Fawcett had had a long and distinguished military career prior to 1924. He had started as an artilleryman. He had served in World War I, and he had later been sent for duty in Ceylon. It was there that he got his first taste of jungle exploration. Later, when he was sent to Bolivia on a commission to determine the border between that country and Brazil, he became interested in the mysteries of the South American hinterland. From then on, his life was devoted to the exploration of central Brazil.

The motivating force of Fawcett's exploration soon changed from a purely scientific one to a more dreamy one, to the pursuit of an ideal, to the search for a Utopia. He dreamed of a lost civilization that had flourished in Northern Brazil,

beautiful buildings and cities, gold ornaments, precious stones, and "a mysterious light," showing that its far-away inhabitants had gained a knowledge of the natural forces which Western Civilization was only beginning to understand. He wrote in 1925: "Supplementing these researches with many years of exploration in the swamps and jungles of Brazil and other South American countries, I feel assurance in the definite assertion that there are remains of majestic old civilizations to be discovered there. Contrary to the preconceived notion, it is in South America that the origin of the mysterious civilization of the West must be sought." Ruins of buildings found on the Upper Amazon had been singularly lacking in the stains of lamp-black usually found among remains of the past. This fact led Fawcett to believe that the inhabitants of those buildings had been in possession of a method of lighting unknown to us today. He conjectured that it might be *atomic energy.* Sometimes Fawcett talked of this "lost civilization" as having been destroyed by a great earthquake or by the very energy that it had let loose. At other times, he spoke of the "mysterious light" seen by the Indians of the region, and he believed that the civilization still lived on, isolated from the rest of the world. He wanted to find it and live in it.

Such was the man who was sent by the Royal Geographic Society of London on a "scientific" expedition to the wilds of Brazil. Such was the man who was to be the center of so much discussion and controversy in the two decades that followed. Such was the man who could create the "Fawcett Legend."

NOTHING was heard of Fawcett after that last mysterious message from beyond Cuiabá. This was not considered unduly alarming at first. Many an explorer had disappeared into the Brazilian jungle for two or three years without being heard from. Usually they returned. Often they did not. But every man who went into the interior on such an expedition did so with the full realization that it was quite possible that he would never return.

Then in 1927, a young French engineer, de Courtville, came out of the jungle with a strange story. He offered the first link in a chain that was to become the baffling "Fawcett Legend." De Courtville said that he had seen Fawcett alive in an Indian village. The English explorer was described as being crazed and not wanting to return to civilization. (This Mrs. Fawcett quickly denied, holding that it could not possibly be true.) The young Frenchman described Fawcett as being in a pitiful condition, his legs bare and covered with mosquitoes, his clothes torn and faded, his face thin and sickly. When de Courtville suggested that Fawcett return to civilization for medical treatment, he refused. When he suggested that he drive the mosquitoes from his bare legs, he received the extraordinary reply: "They, too, are hungry, poor devils."

But in that very year additional news seemed to destroy the hope that the de Courtville story had offered that Fawcett was still alive. Colonel Alfred M. Morris, an Englishman, explored the Araguaya River region in 1927. He returned saying that he had found the notorious Lampeao Tribe with a revolver and compass marked "H. P. Fawcett." If this were true the chances were overwhelming that Fawcett had suffered death at the hands of the treacherous Lampeaos.

In spite of this discouraging report, the two years that followed saw a number of expeditions start out in search of the lost explorer. An expedition headed by Dr. Montgomery McGovern, an American, came back empty-handed. Another, under the leadership of Mr. P. R. Young, encountered hostile Indians and was forced to turn back without securing any additional information. Finally, in 1928, the much publicized expedition of Commander George M. Dyott, USN, got under way. After pushing his way through the difficult terrain in the interior of Brazil, Dyott gathered evidence that he thought to be conclusive. Aloique, chief of the Anaqua Tribe, told him that a white stranger traveling through that country in 1925 had been ambushed and killed. In the chief's hut, Dyott found Fawcett's suitcases; and about the neck of one of the chief's children, he saw a metal plate, such as scientific instrument makers fix to their products. The chief promised to lead Dyott to the site of the massacre, where the explorer hoped to gather definite evi-

dence of Fawcett's death; but the hostility of a neighboring tribe made it impossible to continue farther. Dyott, with many of his companions sick, decided to return to civilization. In August 1928 Dyott announced to the world that the Fawcett expedition had been wiped out by Indians. This event was supposed to have happened in July 1925, five days after the expedition had crossed the Kuluene River. This revelation seemed to put an end to the "Fawcett Legend" and the rescue expeditions to the interior of Brazil. But such was not the case.

In April 1932, the Brazilian General Rondon sent to the British Consul General in Rio de Janeiro a statement by a Swiss hunter, Stephen Rattin, saying that the latter had found Fawcett alive. Rondon himself was frankly skeptical about the story, for, previous to this, Bacaeri, Indian chief of Cuiabá had told him in detail of how Fawcett had died. Rondon had continued to investigate Bacaeri's story, and his investigations had seemed to confirm that it was true. Furthermore, to back up Rondon's skepticism, a story came from Philiadelphia. There, Vicenzo Petrullo, just returned from a Brazilian expedition, said that all evidence that he had gathered in that region pointed to the fact that Fawcett had died of hunger and thirst far from where Rattin claimed to have found him.

In spite of all his doubts, Rondon sent Rattin to see the British officials, for, as he said, "there do exist the very slightest hopes." The British Consul in Rio de Janeiro, Arthur Abbott, and the Consul in Sao Paulo, Charles Goodwin, were interested in Rattin's story. They did not share Rondon's skepticism. Goodwin showed Rattin two photographs. The first was of a man who looked very much like Fawcett. Rattin examined it carefully, but denied that that was the man he had seen. Goodwin then showed him a photograph of Fawcett, and the hunter recognized it immediately. This test impressed the British Consul considerably; for, according to Rattin's story, he had not even known who Fawcett was until he had returned to civilization. He had found this strange white man a captive of an Indian tribe. He had promised to save him, so when he returned to civilization, he had gone immediately to the authorities with his story. It was they who told him who Fawcett was, and it was then that he recognized the photograph. To further confirm his story, Rattin described a ring that the captive white man was wearing. This description was communicated to Mrs. Fawcett, and the explorer's wife immediately identified it as the ring that her husband wore.

AT AN Associated Press interview, Rondon pointed out that Fawcett had disappeared 800 kilometers away from where Rattin had "found" him. The general doubted that Fawcett could have traveled that distance on foot, and he further doubted that Rattin had, as he claimed, gone that far on muleback. Rattin explained that Fawcett had made the trip with an Indian tribe. They had gone to attack an enemy tribe, but they were defeated, and Fawcett was taken prisoner. General Rondon, considered the foremost authority on Indians in the interior of Brazil, stated that he knew of the existence of no such tribe.

In spite of the doubts regarding Rattin's story, the "Fawcett Legend" had been renewed. Dyott said that he was prepared to search again. An expedition was planned in Boston under Ralph Forrest Donaldson, movie cameraman and flier. It was to include Captain Frederick Melville, companion to Admiral Byrd on his expedition to the South Pole. Rattin prepared an expedition to "fulfill my promise to Fawcett." He took with him three Paraguayan hunters, accustomed to life in the jungle, and an United Press correspondent, Horacio Fusoni. He started into the jungle towards the point that he had described to Rondon. Rattin and his expedition have not been heard from since. The "Fawcett Legend" was widening.

Then in 1932 came the strangest story of them all. It was told by Lieutenant Michel Angelo Trucchi, late of the Italian Cavalry, decorated with the Italian War Cross in the First World War. Lieutenant Trucchi had returned to Italy from Brazil with General Italo Balbo in 1931. In 1932, after three years of silence, imposed upon him by "a promise to Fawcett," he told his story to the press. Trucchi's story was a dramatic one. It was one of his own adventures exploring the Brazilian jungle,

of an Indian attack beaten off, of being struck from behind with a club and coming to as a captive in an Indian village. Trucchi tells of three days of captivity tied to a tree, with his hands above his head. Those were days of hunger and thirst, of torture by the insects of the jungle. Trucchi's story was climaxed by the arrival of a white man at the Indian camp. This man wore the costume of an Indian chieftain (a "cacique"), and he was treated as a demi-god by the natives. He approached Trucchi and spoke to him first in German and then in French. When he finally became convinced that the stranger's intentions were good, Trucchi answered him and explained how he had arrived in such a predicament. He went on to say that he thought the Indians intended to kill him. The stranger ordered the release of Trucchi, but he made the Italian promise not to reveal his secret for three years. The man gave his name as Fawcett.

Trucchi's story was partially confirmed by another account of Max H. de Flora, Franz Reichl, and Ervin Jancke. They repeated a story told to them by an Indian in the interior of Brazil, a story told without any leading questions being asked or any suggestions being made. The Indian had been with an expedition into the interior (presumably the Fawcett expedition). The expedition had been attacked by hostile natives and annihilated except for this one Indian and one white man. The Indian was able to persuade the victorious tribe to spare his life and that of the ohe remaining white man. He and the white man, who was still unconscious from a blow on the head, were taken to the "provisional camp" of the Indians, and there the white man recovered consciousness. The Indians were amazed at the strange tongue that their captive spoke, and when he made fire (with a match or a lighter) they were further impressed. They gave a large banquet in his honor, and during these festivities, his fellow captive escaped. When he later returned to where the camp had been, it had disappeared; and he never heard of nor saw the tribe or the white man again. This story would explain how Fawcett came into the position where Trucchi "found" him.

Soon after these two stories had been widely publicized, a Brazilian Inspector of Indians found in the jungle a theodolite compass in good condition. Mrs. Fawcett identified it as belonging to her husband, and the manufacturers identified it as the one sold to Colonel Fawcett. This mechanism could only be detached by an expert. It could not have been done by an Indian. It was still oiled and in good condition. The new discovery suggested that *someone* from the expedition was still alive.

The years that followed saw a renewal of the expeditions in search of Fawcett. The Robert Churchward expedition penetrated into the "Green Hell." It was accompanied by the author Peter Fleming, who wrote to the London *Times,* "We brought back no conclusive proof that Fawcett is dead; but no one who has seen anything of the region in which he disappeared can entertain the possibility of his survival." In October 1935 the *Arbeider Bladet* of Oslo declared that Fawcett was dead. It told the story gathered by Captain Reider Lovlie, just returned from a Brazilian expedition: Jack Fawcett died from an attack of fever in Bakari; Rimmel died later; Fawcett went on with the natives of the region; he was captured in an ambush and later killed by the Marcego Indians. In spite of this report, a Swedish expedition under Arne Arbin set out to look for Fawcett in 1936. And a Brazilian expedition under José Morbeck started in the same year. Both came back without any conclusive results.

IN 1940, another strange story came out of Brazil, and the "Fawcett Legend" received renewed life. Willi Aureli told of an Indian girl, Carolina, whom he had found. She was a Mattos Indian, eighteen years of age, and she had been kidnaped and held captive for two years by the Carape Indians. When she finally escaped she told Aureli of twenty-two white prisoners being held by the Carapes. Among these were believed to be: Fawcett, Rattin, and Horacio Fusoni, the United Press corresondent who had accompanied Rattin. The Mattos girl gave an exceptionally accurate description of Fusoni.

In the early month of this same year, four young Argentines, Domingo A. Curio, Roberto Manuel Moure, Juan Martius

Vergos, and Luis Amado started from Asunción of Paraguay to continue the search of Fawcett. Curio started by canoe up the inland rivers, and for several days he was lost. Later, the entire party started out and they have not been heard of since. Another four names joined the list of "missing in quest of the Fawcett Legend."

By now the "Fawcett Legend" had many interesting sidelights. The Spiritualists had taken up the search for the lost explorer. Mrs. Fawcett, somewhat of a Spiritualist herself, claimed in 1928 that she had a perception, unconnected with her ordinary senses, that told her that her husband was still alive. Later she held that she was in telepathic communication with Fawcett, but she denied vehemently the stories that he did not want to come home or that he was living with two hundred native wives in an Indian Mormon community.

The Soviet Union found in the "Fawcett Legend" another phase of "capitalistic imperialism." In 1934, the Moscow *Evening,* then the most widely read evening paper in the Russian capital, declared that Fawcett was alive and well. It held that he was a "British Political Agent" in Brazil. He communicates with England by short-wave, and the Foreign Office in London has filled two fat volumes with reports that it has received from him. Communism tagged the hapless Fawcett as "a second Colonel Lawrence."

Perhaps the most unexpected comments came from the United States. Some Indians in the Western States were reported as protesting the implications that Fawcett had been killed by Indians. Someone, very seriously, suggested that the man still alive in the Brazilian jungle was not Fawcett at all, but Ambrose Bierce, the famous author who had disappeared in Mexico in 1913.

And now the Spriggs expedition is starting out to add its paragraph to the "Fawcett Legend." It will take with it its helicopter, its tractors and bulldozers, and its amphibious vehicles. It may be gone as long as fourteen years, but it expects to find Fawcett and perhaps to find the lost civilization. As Spriggs describes his purposes and hopes: "I think that Fawcett is still alive on the Upper Amazon, and I am determined to find him. Fawcett told me, before starting on his expedition, that he wanted to find a lost civilization that exists on the Upper Amazon. He added that if he found what he sought he would never return.

"I think that he found what he wanted. The failure of the expeditions in search of him have tended to discredit this theory. It is obvious that if Fawcett is still alive we will find him in one of the hidden cities that I believe to exist in that region. We have a great advantage over the previous expeditions, for we have modern equipment, equipment proved and improved during the war in all corners of the world. All has been planned scientifically. As for men, we have what we want. We have a group of men that is prepared to intern itself in the "Green Hell" for an indefinite period in search of the lost civilization, and that is disposed to abandon our civilization for a better one, if it can be found. Like Fawcett, we will not return if we find what we are looking for."

Spriggs received three thousand applications to go on his expedition, but he only chose thirteen. Three thousand persons were willing to put up five hundred pounds sterling, lose themselves from civilization in the Brazilian jungle for perhaps twelve years, all in search of a "lost civilization" and the "Fawcett Legend."

EXAMINING the evidence of the "Fawcett Legend" from a serious point of view, what are the possibilities that Fawcett is still alive? The most convincing evidence that he is alive might be summarized in six points. First, Fawcett's last message is phrased in a way that might very well indicate that the explorer did not expect to be killed, but that he expected to be in a state of isolation or captivity that would make further communication impossible. It might also fit into the theory that he was voluntarily withdrawing from civilization to a primitive life or to a "lost civilization." Second, de Courtville's and later stories of his insanity would indicate that he was probably not killed by the Indians; for it is a well-established fact that the Indians do not kill, or even harm mentally deficient people. Third, Rattin's description of Fawcett's ring and his identification of Fawcett's picture seem fairly good evidence

that he saw the explorer. Rattin's willingness to lose himself in the jungle in search of Fawcett also indicates that he, at least, believed his story. Fourth, the Trucchi story, though melodramatic and obviously exaggerated, comes from what would seem to be a reliable source. It was partially confirmed by the de Flora story. Fifth, the Aureli story does not come from a particularly reliable source, but the description of Fusoni seems convincing. If it were a description of Fawcett, whose picture was well-known in newspapers, it would be less persuasive. Sixth, the discovery of the compass, identified as Fawcett's, seems the best piece of evidence. It indicates that *someone* from the expedition was alive *at that time*. But that was fourteen years ago, and the man alive at that time did not necessarily have to be Fawcett.

None of this evidence even approaches scholarly reliability. All the stories but that of Aureli were over ten years ago; and if they were conceded to be true, the chances are that Fawcett would be dead by now: the climate of the Upper Amazon is not exactly healthy for a white man. The various stories by individuals cannot be checked by witnesses. They might all arise from a very human motive —the desire for publicity. Even Rattin's expedition in search of Fawcett might be but an additional means of "hitting the headlines."

On the other hand, there is no really positive evidence of Fawcett's death. Such expeditions as those headed by Dyott and Churchward, reliable and serious men, were inclined to believe that there was no possibility of Fawcett being alive; but they could produce no conclusive evidence. Dyott himself, after hearing Rattin's story, was willing to doubt the results of his own investigations.

The most that we can honestly say about the "Fawcett Legend" is that "we do not know." There are *some indications* that Fawcett *might* be alive. There are *more indications* that he is dead. There is no conclusive evidence that he is dead.

As for the story of the modern El Dorado, there is no evidence whatsoever for such a theory. The only thing that we know about that area of Brazil is that it is populated by several tribes of uncertain ethnological backgrounds. Many words to be found in the region are the same as those found among the Cherokees and Sioux in North America. Many are the same as those found among the Incas of Peru. The Indians of the region have similar facial characteristics to those in other parts of the continent. These facts might indicate that this area was the cradle of American Indian culture, but all present archeological theories deny it. There is nothing to confirm a theory of a lost advanced civilization.

It is interesting to note, however, that the twentieth century idea of El Dorado reflects the values of the twentieth century just as the sixteenth century El Dorado reflected the values of the sixteenth century. The ideal of the Spanish "conquistadores" pictured a life of luxury and ease: the ideal of the "Hidalgo." The golden cities of El Dorado would bring this. The ideal of the twentieth century pictures a life of machines, science, and production: the ideal of the Atomic Age. The "mysterious light" of El Dorado would bring this.

J. Huizinga, the great Dutch historian, holds that in ages of crisis in a culture, ages when a culture seems to be disintegrating, men turn to one of three solutions for their personal problems. One of the solutions that Huizinga points to is "the way of the dream." "For there is a third path to a world more beautiful, trodden in all ages and civilizations, the easiest and also the most fallacious of all, that of the dream. A promise to escape from the gloomy actual is held out to all; we have only to color life with fancy, to enter upon the quest of oblivion, sought in the delusion of ideal harmony."

Three thousand persons applied to go on this modern quest for an El Dorado. There was no real evidence to indicate the survival of Colonel Fawcett or of the "lost civilization." Most evidence, and common sense, pointed in the other direction. But these three thousand persons chose to accept the "Fawcett Legend." Theirs is the twentieth century escape from the world of reality, the "way of the dream."

As for the fate of this escape into the "Green Hell," we can only paraphrase the last lines of James Hilton's *Lost Horizons*: we hope that these fourteen men will find their "mysterious light"—we hope that all men will find their "mysterious light."

One hand toyed indolently with the blossoms of a dwarf plum tree—the other held a dainty pearl-handled pistol.

HE WHO RIDES THE TIGER

By
JAMES NORMAN

THE STORY THUS FAR:

DAVID ARMOUR, a noted Orientalist, wakes to find himself lying, weak and delirious, on a *k'ang* in Feng Wang Mission in North China—in the care of DR. LARSON, Swedish missionary, and GIMIENDO HERNANDEZ QUINTO, a huge inscrutable Mexican. They tell the American he was brought to the mission two months before by Chinese partisan troops who had found him wandering aimlessly nearby.

Armour is unable to remember any event since a certain luncheon at the Wagon-Lits Hotel in Peiping back in 1940, six years before. And he is haunted by the fear that he may have collaborated with the Nips.

Quinto tells Armour that his wife, ADRIAN, forced to leave China during the war, has returned to Shanghai to search for him. And Quinto urges him to remain in China to search for the fabulously precious Bronzes of T'ang, lost during the war. He believes they can be used to smooth the bargaining between the Northern Government and the Nationalists. Armour, now strong enough to travel, leaves for Shanghai. On the train, he meets MONSIEUR CHEN, a plump, French-speaking Chinese who says he is an exporter and offers the American a commission as his agent in New York. He warns Armour that Shanghai may be dangerous for him—and advises him to leave China at once.

In Shanghai, David and Adrian are reunited at last. She begs him to return to the States, but Armour cannot rest until he picks up the threads

ILLUSTRATED BY L. STERNE STEVENS

of his six lost years. Other forces are at work to influence his decision. Monsieur Chen has set one of his watchdogs—a Chinese oddly attired in golf clothes—on his trail; MR. WU, a journalist, turns up wherever he goes; and Quinto sends word for Armour to come to the Cathay Bar. Leaving a message at the hotel for Adrian to join them, Armour meets the Mexican—and Mr. Wu. They discuss the Bronzes. Armour is doubtful of their existence—but Quinto claims to have traced them to Nanking. . . . An extraordinarily beautiful Eurasian girl enters the bar. Incredibly, hers is the face Armour had seen in his half-mad, delirious dreams at Feng Wang Mission! But her name, ETOILE, stirs no memories in his confused brain. He begins to worry at Adrian's tardiness. . . .

On her way to meet David, Adrian is terrified to find she is being followed. She takes refuge in a foreign limousine which draws up beside her, believing the occupants to be American. But her companion is Monsieur Chen—and the Chinese who has been trailing her climbs in beside the chauffeur! By a circuitous route, Chen eventually delivers Adrian at the Cathay. Armour, hearing the story, understands Chen's peculiarly Chinese threat to kidnap Adrian unless the American gets out of China.

The Armours return to their hotel. Next morning, Quinto calls to renew his efforts to persuade Armour to help him find the Bronzes. Armour refuses. BYRNES, editor of the Shanghai *News,* comes to interview Armour. While they are talking, a boy brings Armour a letter. It reads,

Mon Cher David,

I have searched for you endlessly. Now, magically, you have reappeared, but you have not come to me. In the Cathay, you stared at me, yet you did not seem to want to recognize me. What has happened between us, David? If I have done something wrong, let me repair it. . .

Your devoted wife,
Etoile

PART IV

HE ROSE slowly, stood motionless and frigid. Everything in the room stopped, dead still and detached. It was as if someone had taken the hands of a huge clock tuned to the world and held the hands immovable: time had stopped, the brown silted rivers no longer flowed to the sea, the sun made no motion across the sky.

Then he heard both Adrian's and Byrnes' voices reaching toward him worriedly. Byrnes: "You sick, Armour?" and Adrian: "David—"

A torrent of incredulous and hysteric outrage swept through him. "It's not true! It can't be!" he protested, then he realized he was shouting it.

The dry, sandy pumping of his laboring heart beat against his nerves and he began to shake from head to foot. He reached for the chair and sinking onto it, tried to pull himself together. He told himself: "This can't be! There's no need to worry. A mistake." Then, without direct control or consciousness, he began pouring forth a steady stream of meaningless curses.

Adrian had taken the note from his hand. She read it and now stared at him, her lips turning pale, becoming a thin-lined and agonized reproof. Behind her, Byrnes tried to look helpful in spite of the expression of foolish embarrassment and confusion upon his face.

"It's not true, is it, Dave? Tell me," Adrian cried.

He blinked his eyes slowly, looking at her with a kind of delayed and somnambulistic blankness. The urge to take her into his arms swam through him and dissipated itself helplessly. "The Eurasian girl at the restaurant last night," he said feverishly. "The one in the lotus blossom, the spinning. . ."

Adrian spoke again, her voice flat, showing frayed edges of bitterness. "But when, David?"

He pulled himself up rigidly, looking at her and saying, "I don't know any more about it than you do."

Without again looking at her or so much as realizing Byrnes was an entity in the room, he walked to the door and went out.

He had walked back and forth, the length of the Bund, for more than an hour until the mere mechanics of motion calmed his tormented mind. He wanted to think of this thing reasonably, yet each time his mind touched it the feeling of frenzied outrage returned. What grounds were there for reasonableness? A wife named Etoile—and Adrian. It was a malevolent dream, sly, comic and mad; it seemed to face him, it stared at him while it roared his name deliberately as though summoning him not from any present world, but from a plane of anachronistic dreams.

He thought bitterly of the cablegram he and Adrian had sent to her father shortly after breakfast. "Home soon," it had read. "Home soon."

His glance swept the reach of the river. The sluggish waters and crowded banks

boats where families lived and died, scarcely ever touching foot to land. He watched a larger ship—a food relief ship. Even it had its own life. Although it vanished for months at a time on chartless seas, it at least carried a log to pronounce where it had been, to recall what had happened.

A barge loaded with wool passed the ship and canted toward the Bund wharves; one of its bales had broken and tiny handfuls of uncarded wool began to dot the muddy waters. A half dozen shell-like boats poled by screaming, exciting women and girls darted from the mass of shipping toward the drifting bits of treasure, dipping tufts up with butterfly nets and long pronged sticks. Armour sighed heavily. Not even an ounce of wool or cotton was lost in China, yet he had been able to lose six years of his life, or almost lose them. He wished, now, that he had lost them irrevocably. It might have spared him the agony of the past beginning to crowd him.

He crossed the wide boulevard and telephoned the New Astor from one of the Bund buildings. There was no response from Adrian's room, no message left at the desk. He returned to the street and signaled to a group of rickshaw runners. The crowd of *huang-pao ch'e* pullers gathered in a circle around him, balancing the shafts of their bicycle-tired vehicles, bidding noisily for his fare. He chose one and stepped over the polished shafts.

"Rue Cardinal Mercier," he explained the directions in *pa hua* vernacular.

The rickshaw coolie, a solid and short man with close-shaven perspiring head grinned at him as though he were a familiar and frequently carried passenger. He steadied the shafts and began to move, body leaning forward as though pushing against an invisible wind. Armour glanced back. He was still surprised that neither of Monsieur Chen's two Dogs of Fu had followed him from the hotel nor had spotted him on the Bund.

He sat back, relaxed for the instant, feeling almost secure in the steady glide of the vehicle until suddenly he noticed other rickshaws along the street crowding in toward his, rickshaws running parallel while the coolies pulling his vehicle and the others chattered in quick riding rhythms. At a corner near the edge of the old French Concession he heard the coolie shout: *"Wu-kuan Chiao.* I am the puller of the foreign guerrilla leader, Chiao. You will notice, I go with eminence."

More vehicles came toward them, the grinning runners in their worn and body-moist jackets, their trousers tied at the ankles above black cloth slippers, jogging alongside Armour's rickshaw. High-pitched comments were tossed back and forth among the running men—comments on his exploits as a guerrilla, his physical features, discussions about foreigners in general. Chinese passengers in some of the vehicles eyed him with veiled curiosity.

Armour called to his runner, but before he could get the man to cease heralding him to all passing vehicles and men, half of Shanghai knew that he was bound for Rue Cardinal Mercier. He had forgotten that the Shanghai rickshaw coolie was the most alert and literate of China's proletariat; more than half read newspapers and all of them delighted in caustic political discussions.

The almost triumphal march thinned and finally disappeared as they penetrated the French area. The rickshaw turned through the gateway of a private estate Number 24, and followed a curving roadway across an elaborate garden. A heavy perfume of luxuriant vegetation stirred in the afternoon sunlight. As they came to a long row of parked cars Armour suddenly stiffened. He saw, within one of the limousines, the saucer-faced Cantonese, Monsieur Chen's Dog of Fu.

CHAPTER XIV

DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER

A CHINESE servant advanced to the driveway to meet the rickshaw. He wore a coat of lemon-colored silk and he bowed, saying, "Your Excellency," as Armour stepped down to the driveway.

Armour frowned at the coat, then toward the limousine. Chen's man seemed not to have noticed him. He turned to the servant.

"What's going on?"

Face solemn, breaking into no smile, no amusement, the servant said, "Big lady dressing, undressing, show."

Armour looked toward the house, a

huge castle of a place that stood calmly, almost frigidly amidst a large garden of shaven lawns and Empire exhibition flowerbeds. The house was cream-colored and rigidly proconsular. With its cool, solid Doric porticoes, it seemed thoroughly Continental and, in the Chinese afternoon, totally appalling. A large group of people had gathered upon the lawn at one side of the house. They sat in wicker chairs and at tables under colored umbrellas and casually watched a girl who strolled along a velvet runner laid upon the lawn. The girl walked with the studied and deliberate movements of a mannequin while a stringed trio played soft, not too gay music.

A woman separated herself from the group and came to meet him. She was a sinewy vivacious creature approaching prosperous middle age.

"Monsieur . . .?"

"Armour. David Armour."

"Ah, the real Monsieur Armour?" Her voice was deep and musical. She could be a Slav, White Russian, Armour thought.

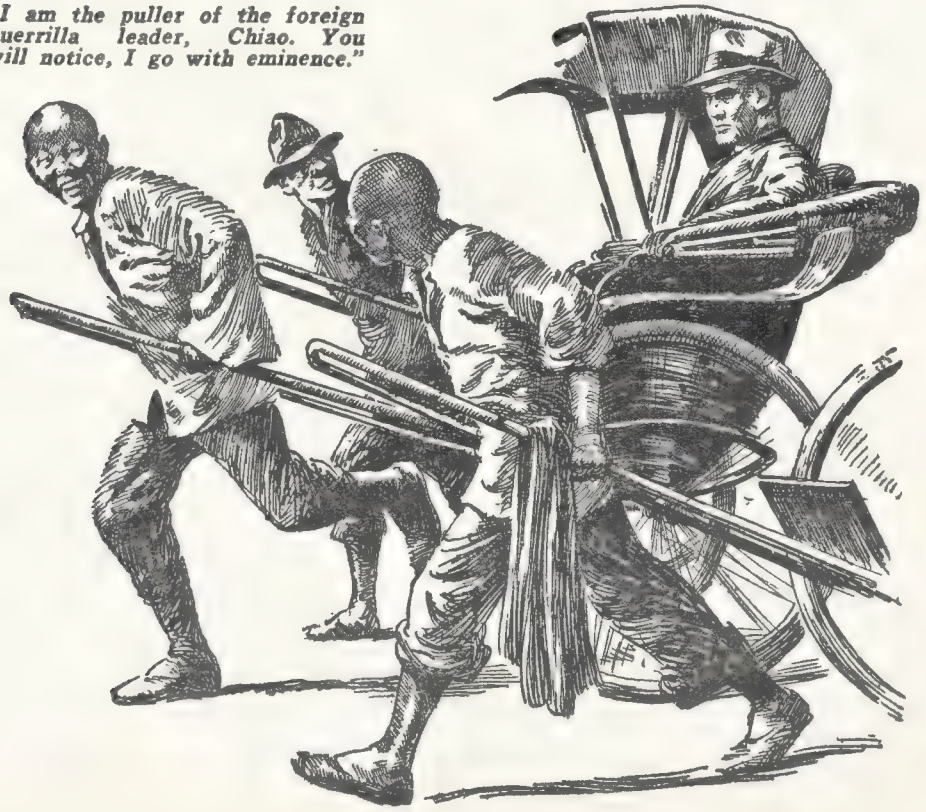
"I want to find a Miss Etoile," he said.

"*Voilá,* I am Madame Serge," the woman spoke effusively. Her shoulders in motion were as eloquent as her voice. "Please, you are welcome," she said, waving her hand toward the group on the lawn. "It is my first post-war fashion salon. We find it so difficult to arrange after the years of war but I believe you will be enchanted." She linked her arms in his and led him across the lawn.

"Is there a girl named Etoile here?"

"Etoile? Ah, so. She models. Come, you'll view her soon. A gown I call *Shadow Lane.*" She glanced at him oddly and searchingly.

He took a chair at the edge of the crowd and Madame Serge sat beside him. She gave him a printed program which, like a concert program, listed the titles of gowns and the composer—always Madame Serge. He glanced over the



"I am the puller of the foreign guerrilla leader, Chiao. You will notice, I go with eminence."

names: *Loneliness, Petit Triomphe, Shadow Lane, Carmen . . .*

Madame Serge touched his arm with her program and pointed toward a striking, heavy-set American woman who fondled an elastic-skinned Shantung *Lo-sze* lap dog in her arms. "The very best people have come," said Madame. "And in Shanghai, there are so few now. She is the wife of an American General. *Trés gentille.*" Madame nodded toward a group of well-groomed Chinese men and women, adding, "Of course, we did not invite Chinese before. Times have changed, *on puis faire les mieux.* They are all the most important Chinese. They are of course very very rich, and their husbands very important."

ARMOUR'S glance slid over the group. The foreigners sat carefully apart from the Chinese, accepting them and the new ways of China, but with resignation. He noticed on icy French brunette who sat like a Madonna, and another fluttery, thrilled, middle-aged American woman who applauded lightly with gloved hands. Then he saw Monsieur Chen sitting beside and whispering animatedly to a blonde woman.

"Two more gowns and you will view Etoile," Madame Serge announced. "I suppose you are very very happy to see her again?"

Armour shot her a quick glance. Her face showed nothing more than suave amusement. "How long has she been with you?" he asked.

"Etoile? Two months, perhaps."

"Is she from Shanghai?"

Madame shrugged. "But no. She is a Soochow girl." She rose, laying her hand on his shoulder for a moment. "I shall tell her you're here."

A flutter of applause greeted a bosomy mannequin parading upon the black runner. He ran his eyes thoughtfully around: caught a glimpse of a woman flicking a cigarette upon the springy grass; a Chinese merchant thrusting his fan into the collar of his gown; a Chinese servant moving quietly among the tables carefully collecting the ends of sandwiches, salvaging crusts that would be sold and savored as luxuries in the Old City on the morrow. Madame Serge's fashion salon suddenly struck him as being grotesque and horrible. It was almost as if it had been deliberately created by one of the giant satirists of society—a Swift, a Voltaire or Peiping's Lao She. Each moment at Madame Serge's went off like clockwork; a magnificently contrived charade, the image of another kind of life Shanghai had once lived but could no longer repeat with the same certainty, a charade performed by the Sleepwalkers, the Leftovers, Quinto's soulless and disinherited *Hai Shang Shuomang jen.* The mechanism of Shanghai's old international life still ticked on, but like a mechanical toy abandoned by a growing child, its doom seemed inevitable. It had corroded and would stop. The void between the two halves of mankind in the city was too desperately wide to be bridged by the butt end of a sandwich.

"Alors, Monsieur Armour, ça va?"

Armour looked up and saw Monsieur Chen dragging a reed chair next to his. He had come without his blonde and his cat. "Your wife, she does not come? *C'est un dommage.* I repeat." M. Chen softened his voice to a breathless whisper. The flesh on his corpulent face appeared more vividly yellow and gelatinous than Armour ever remembered it.

"You get around," he told the Chinese.

"Ah, friend of all the world, that is to say, friend of no one." Chen shrugged philosophically. "But Madame Armour, does she not wish the new dress?"

"Not today."

"Alors, then you still leave Shanghai tomorrow, *n'est-ce pas?* Remember, it is advisable." M. Chen leaned forward, confidential. "Business in Shanghai is beyond imagination. But America, I tell you, that is another thing. The black market is magnificent, I am told. It's the laws, I tell you. China does not have enough laws. It is difficult to find laws to break, but in America you have the multiplicity of laws. The opportunity is vast. Shall we confer this evening; the same commission; New York?"

Armour drew a deep breath and avoided making a reply. For the hundredth time his glance went toward the porticoed house. He was annoyed and suspicious that M. Chen should be here at this moment.

On the lawn, the stringed trio began playing a westernized Peiping melody,

thin, delicate tones alternating between lights and shades. A flurry of interest skimmed through the section of Chinese guests, particularly among the men. Even M. Chen became silent and attentive. Etoile came down the black velvet runner, moving slowly and with deliberate grace, modeling a bright crepe-silk jacket which, with its square jade buttons and long, old-style embroidered sleeves, seemed a part of her.

Armour strove to conceal the apprehension stealing upon him. As he watched her come to the end of the runner a sudden sense of dismay filled him. He had seen her and had been with her somewhere and sometime in the past, not at the Cathay, not as the image dreamed of in a lotus blossom, but at a time and place beyond that. The recognition remained elusive, disconcerting and incomplete. Without yet having heard her voice, he knew how it would sound, for a stirring memory told him its tone and inflection.

HE GLANCED carefully toward M. Chen. The Chinese appeared to be dazzled by the Eurasian girl. He remembered that M. Chen had sat at her table at the Cathay the previous evening.

The girl left the velvet runner. Another mannequin, a European girl modeling a sport suit, had taken her place. Armour watched with growing foreboding as the Eurasian threaded her way among the guests and came toward him, quickening her pace. He was struck by the way her body seemed always poised, her oval face turned gracefully upon the stiff quilted collar of the silk jacket.

He rose to meet her.

"Etoile?" he said it awkwardly.

She smiled pleasantly, her long dark lashes hovering over her eyes as they met his blunt stare with a kind of demure, yet candid indolence.

"Etoile, *c'est moi,*" she said. Her voice same with the rounded, pliable intonations of the Soochow accent.

"You sent me that note?"

She nodded, then looking at Monsieur Chen, her brows knitted in a delicate fleeting frown. "Do you know my husband, Monsieur Chen?" she said.

Chen's eyes went wide and he stared from the girl to Armour as though stunned. "Ha, *une farce, n'est-ce pas?* A joke?" he demanded abruptly.

"*Pas du tout,*" the girl replied. "He is my husband."

"I say, it is impossible." Chen raised his voice in curious defiance. "He is already married. It is completely impossible. *Un bobard.*" The Chinese turned upon Armour with vehemence. "Take my word, Monsieur. She has a reputation for marriage. She makes the collection of men as you might collect stamps."

Etoile's wide dark almond-shaped eyes ran toward M. Chen with rebuke. It was the pictorial glance of a lady accosted by a clumsy rumor.

"But I have the marriage contract," she said. Turning to Armour she asked, "Shall I show it to him, *mon cher?*"

Armour shook his head. He took her by the arm and guided her away from M. Chen. As they hurried across the shaven lawn he heard Chen calling: "I insist, Monsieur. We must confer afterward." When they were quite alone he stopped, and facing her, he spoke bluntly.

"Look," he said. "I don't know you."

"But you *are* my husband." Her lids crept downward a fraction, shading the glance so direct and personal.

"If I've ever been with you, I don't recall where. I'm sorry, but you'd better start explaining," he said impatiently.

She smiled sympathetically. Her lips were very red and expressive and there was a certain wistfulness in her glance.

She said, "Then the illness has come upon you again. I was so fearful it would."

He stared at her questioningly. "Illness?"

"Yes," she nodded. "While we were together you were ill quite often. Our doctors called it the disease of forgetfulness. At times you were in bed for weeks with delirium. You didn't always recognize me. I feared it had come again when, last night, I saw you and heard that you claimed to be a guerrilla fighter named Chiao. That story is impossible because you have never been in Shantung during that time."

He shook his head, trying to brush aside the dull veil standing before his thoughts, a curtain that lay half parted, letting this girl's pale oval face show through, yet revealing nothing behind her.

"When were we married?" he asked.

She came closer, touching his arm. Her scent had a strange texture, making him think of her as someone with the demureness of a mission school graduate blended into the exotic background of China. "Don't you remember anything?" she asked. "Do you remember Lukouchiao?"

He frowned blankly.

THERE was an air of disappointment in her glance. She seemed to be waiting for him to kiss her and was hurt that he had not. "At Lukouchiao, we met," she explained simply. "You came to my compartment on the Peiping-Hankow train. I think we were both in love that instant. It was the same kind of love as Lin Tai-yu suffered for her cousin Chia in the *Dream of the Red Chamber*." She smiled helpfully. "But we did not marry until December."

"This last year?"

"It was in 1941. December."

"Where?"

A slight movement of the girl's shoulders seemed to add a feeling of intimacy to the glance she gave him. She said, "We did not follow the old customs entirely. I am quite modern. And since you had no family home in China we held the ceremony at the Seven Piece Luck Restaurant near my house in Soochow. Second Uncle Liu married us. Do you remember him? He is my second uncle and owner of the restaurant."

"It doesn't come to me at all," he said slowly.

"Don't you remember we lived in the Willow House. . ." Her cool, artful reserve began to melt. Her lips quivered. "But, David, we were so happy together. Please remember."

Her pleading expression, the look in her eyes which cut through him and dissolved doubt, filled him with a sense of irrevocable disaster. She could have been his wife, he thought. Perhaps she had been, yet he had no retention of it, no feeling for her except a swiftly awakening pity.

She looked away from him now and he saw her troubled features abruptly change, becoming composed and serene. Then he saw Madam Serge and two guests coming from the driveway to meet them. His heart suddenly sank as he recognized Adrian and Mr. Byrnes. Etoile wound her arm through his as they came and he heard her say in her Soochow-accented French, "Madam Serge, my husband."

He caught the look of inarticulate enmity that flared in Adrian's eyes, the expression of one woman who has become purely woman and pits herself against another. Byrnes trailed along, looking foolish and uneasy.

Armour fumbled for words. "Etoile, this is my wife, Adrian Armour, and Mr. Byrnes."

The Eurasian girl flushed faintly and stiffened, but only for an instant. Her reaction was different and more subtle than he had expected it to be. She grew cool and reserved, but it was as if the veneer of a French mission school training had dropped away and she now stood forth, distinctly Chinese, a woman with the thousands of years of Cathay's background to help her in the handling of men and women.

"She is really your wife?" Etoile asked.

"Yes."

Etoile's momentary smile crossed Armour and went toward Adrian, abruptly chilling. Her glance swept over Adrian and the two women stared at each other. The very act of staring was full of animosity and challenge. Finally, Etoile turned to Armour.

"Is she your old or new wife?" she asked.

Armour was startled. "We were married before we came to China," he said.

Etoile relaxed and a satisfied smile played upon her lips. "Oh, *c'est bien*, she is the old one then."

The Eurasian girl's answer and her complete air of self-confidence shocked him for a second. The abrupt contrast—this mission trained girl, exquisite and modern and self-sufficient, leaning upon the *mores* of a China older than written history made him wonder if he were going mad. She had accepted Adrian with the subtle fatefulness Chinese women have shown toward the waywardness of their men for centuries. It was the ancient idea of balance and form again, the philosophy of *more-or-less happiness*. It was as if Etoile recognized his right to seek more than one wife according to the ancient standards, as in the manner of the lovely wife of Chia She in the *Red Chamber* who complained indignantly that "other

distinguished families have several wives, why not we?" Yet, Etoile, unlike Chia She's wife, who had thought only of the traditional superiority of the Number One Wife over succeeding ones, seemed subtly to position herself, knowing that the latest wives were always the more favored and more desired in the eyes of a husband. It was a queer, complex system of relationships that relied upon thousands of years of living to make it real, a relationship which Armour sensed that neither Adrian or Mr. Byrnes or Madam Serge had grasped. Etoile had made its meaning intimate and personal, pointedly for him alone.

ON THE lawn near the house, the fashion show appeared to have ended. The musicians played the Chinese anthem, *Three Peoples Principle Song,* with a certain gusto. Armour noticed Etoile glance toward Madame Serge and, as though the glance had been a signal, the Russian woman induced Mr. Byrnes to accompany her toward the house.

Adrian spoke with abrupt anger. "I think she's lying if she claims she's your wife, David."

"But he is my husband," Etoile replied smoothly. "We were married in Soochow."

"Soochow—" A tension and fear threaded Adrian's voice. "Soochow—" she repeated, remembering the rabbit amulet David had given her yesterday and which the antiquarian had said was a Soochow piece.

"We lived there," Etoile went on. "He was ill. When we met, he had forgotten who he was or where he came from. His only identity was a name, *David,* engraved on his watch. I did not know he had other wives, but that did not matter. We loved each other. And if he had not married me, he would have become a prisoner of the Japanese."

Adrian refused to look at the girl. She stared widely at Armour. "You didn't, Dave?"

He ran his fingers through his hair as though to still the ague of his memory, perhaps to grasp something, a meaning from his tormented thoughts. "I don't know, Ade," he protested. "She's in my mind. . . I've seen her somewhere. But that's all I know. Believe me, I'm terribly sorry it had to happen this way."

Turning to Etoile with a new thought, he asked, "Why didn't the Japanese take me?"

Her hands fluttered expressively. "Because of my first uncle, Wang Ti." She paused, waiting for him to show some recognition of the name, then: "Uncle Wang was very important in Wang Chin Wei's puppet government in Nanking with excellent relations with the Japanese Military who occupied Soochow and Nanking. Uncle Wang was a big man until shortly before the end of the war when he was shot by guerrillas. He was a director of the City Council of Soochow. You remember him?"

Armour shook his head. The name of Wang Ti reached into his mind in no way, but for an instant, the ever so slight widening of her eyes seemed to arouse new images of her; a vague recollection now, not only of her face, but in the restless corridors of his memory the touch of her hand upon his lips and brow. There was an imprint of her nearness, her warmth and a faint lingering perfume.

"Uncle Wang secured employment for you in Soochow," Etoile explained. "You made important translations for the Puppet Government. He had arranged papers identifying you as a neutral Irishman. Do you remember, you were called Mr. O'Kelly."

"No."

"I have the papers to show you. They are at my *Chia,* the Willow House in Soochow."

Adrian took a step toward the girl. "What work was he doing?" she demanded.

Etoile sent him one of her narrowing, oblique glances.

"Do you mind, David?" she asked.

"What was it?"

"Translations of American Army documents captured from aviators," Etoile murmured. "But it was not our concern. It only mattered that we were together and that we loved each other."

Armour could hardly keep down the deadly sickness flooding upon him. It was too completely despicable and shocking. Amid the roar of questions pouring through his mind there was only one small island of relief: Quinto had checked the defeated Japanese Army records and Pup-

pet Governments and had found no trace of him. He clung to it desperately.

"I don't believe it. I won't believe it," Adrian cried. She stood very still in her anger, staring at the Eurasian girl.

Etoile's disturbingly startled eyes widened slightly. "What is it you do not believe? That our husband was a collaborationist?"

There was a harsh slap. Etoile stepped back stunned by the suddeness and violence of Adrian's fury, her cheek burning where it had been struck. It was over in a second. After her swift flare-up and the blow, Adrian ran blindly toward a cab parked in the driveway.

Armour reached the cab as it moved slowly up the driveway. He tried to wrench the door open and climb in but it was locked from the inside.

"Adrian, for god sakes, listen," he shouted.

Her face was white and furious, half hidden within the cab. "Let me alone."

"But listen, Ade—"

The taxi moved faster, beyond his call, leaving only a ringing in his ears, an after-echo containing all the bitterness of Adrian's voice and her words: "You belong in Soochow."

"Alors, ça va mal?"

He whirled about and found Monsieur Chen observing him. The Chinese seemed to manage a faintly sardonic yet philosophic air as he smiled.

"Fate favors the bold," Chen said. "Particularly if she is beautiful. *La fortune favorise les audacieux.*"

CHAPTER XV

HEAVEN ABOVE—SOOCHOW BELOW

ETOILE came to him quickly. She moved with such ease and poise, with such sure indolence it made him think she might also be capable of playing a man's rugged game of tennis.

"Please, come into the house," she said, her brows knitting finely again as she glanced at Chen, then fluttered her hand toward the guests on the lawn. "You have caused excitement."

"I have?" he said angrily.

"Please." She remained untouched by the excitement.

A Chinese servant let them into the library. The room was warmer and more comfortable than the severe austerity of the house's exterior: its furnishings, a mixture of Chinese and European, were well blended, showing none of the mongrel styles popular in Shanghai houses which were of no hemisphere but blended the hideous in both.

"Whiskey-soda?" Etoile asked.

"None," he replied flatly. His anger at the girl still burned and her manner of seeming to gloss over what had occurred outside, as though it no longer existed, irritated him. He had never before seen Adrian's anger burst forth with such unrelenting savageness. It had been like experiencing disaster. He began to picture her returning to the hotel and there the logic of her mind would begin to build doubts from the fragments of the past two days. She could only see him in one way now; a man tainted with collaboration who had tried to delay leaving China in order to arrange the spiriting of a fabulous treasure from the country.

He turned to Etoile. "Now that you've alienated me from my wife, what do you want?" he said.

She smiled, then her lids lowered—the *hsiao-chieh* look. "You're my husband too," she said. "Husbands kiss wives, don't they?"

He must have reddened for it brought a low lilting laugh from her lips. "I've still to be shown that we're married," he replied.

"Oh, the papers." She rummaged within the sleeve of her jacket and brought forth a small scroll tightly rolled upon a short ivory rod and tied with a heavy silk cord. "Madame Serge said you had come so I brought it. It is the contract. The other papers are at the house in Soochow."

He unrolled the document and studied the fluid characters.

"The brush is difficult to read," Etoile said. "Do you wish me to help?"

"I'll do it."

He recognized the "good luck" characters and another meaning "auspicious happiness." The form of the characters were difficult, still he was able to make out the nature of the contract: the listing of his property, amounting to nothing; hers, which included a house and the notation

that it would remain her property; a declaration that he would assume and live by her family name in accordance with Chinese law that if a man lives at his wife's house, he takes her name and loses his. The names of the bride's parents appeared illegible—so that the master of ceremonies at the wedding, while reading the contract, would deliberately stumble over them—it being considered unlucky to pronounce the names.

He glanced at the signature and chop of Uncle Wang Ti who witnessed, and Uncle Liu who conducted the ceremony at the Seven Piece Luck Restaurant. The date *was* given in the Chinese lunar calendar but it corresponded to December, 1941.

Rerolling the scroll thoughtfully, he put it in his pocket. Etoile had been watching him with those disturbingly long-lashed dark eyes. She creased her penciled brows questioningly. The fragrance of her perfume seemed to taunt him. He was terribly aware of her nearness. Her lips had parted in a kind of soft humor and for a second he was tempted to kiss her. When the mad impulse passed he could no longer place his mind on the exact reason for that momentary desire. He wondered if it were rooted somewhere in the oblique corners of his brain.

She, too, had felt his indecision. "You do not want to kiss me, *n'est-ce pas*?" she asked aggrievedly.

He touched the scroll in his pocket unconsciously. "What do you want? Just a kiss, or a husband?"

"To be with you, *mon cher;* to go with you to America if you desire, to live in Shanghai, but with you."

HIS glance met hers with swift searching intensity. He wondered how large a part of this girl was honesty; how great a part was adventuress. "Tell me about Soochow," he said. "What did I do each day? Was I with you all the time?"

Etoile sat upon the edge of a mahogany table and idly fingered a few bright pebbles, a scholar's eye-refreshing-stones arranged in a bowl of tinted water. "After Lukouchiao," she explained, "you remained at Willow House mostly. Uncle Wang Ti visited us and you did your work at the house."

"Did I go to Shanghai or Nanking during the occupation?"

She shook her exquisite, slender shoulders. "*Qui le sait?* One does not know. But once, a little before the war's end, Uncle Wang came for you and you were away for two weeks. I do not know where you went. When you returned you were quite ill and you explained nothing. Then, about four months ago your health improved. You were able to go out again. It was then that you ran away." She looked at him reproachfully.

"Did I ever mention archeology?"

Her eyes widened in query.

"The study of ancient objects," he explained. "Grave markers, ink rubbings, bronzes, ceramics."

She parted her lips as if to gasp, then her slender fingers went to her mouth and she belched delicately. Her lids slanted down with a look of innocence.

"Yes," she said after a thoughtful pause. "You did speak of some honored objects after you had come back from being away with Uncle Wang."

He grew alert. "What?"

"But I don't remember. You mentioned something from the tombs, but it was while you were ill. I didn't take note of it. Is it important?"

He shrugged and remained silent. It was all so simple, so direct, so completely a picture, like an ancient Northern silk painting with the brush strokes indicating only the general thought and meaning with deft, delicate lines and leaving so much else for the imagination to fill in. He had no way of reckoning how much of what she said was true. He only knew the measure of how much he would let himself accept as truth.

"Do you have a car?" he asked her suddenly.

"*Mais non,* but Madame Serge— Why?"

"I'm going to Soochow."

"But why?"

"I don't quite believe you, that's why."

"May I come?"

He stared at her for a moment. "If it will get me a car."

"I'll ask Madame." She left the room and returned a few minutes later smiling. She carried a light coat over her arm. "Madame say we can use the Isota and two boys, a chauffeur and the wash-boy," she said.

"We don't need that many."

"But the *k'ai-ch'e-ti* come with the auto." She went with him to the driveway.

There were still a number of cars parked there and, as Armour had half expected, Monsieur Chen was chatting with someone at the far end of the porticoes. Armour stopped Etoile, holding her arm for a second. "Look," he said, "I'd like to get away from here without Monsieur Chen annoying me. Can you get Madame to do us another favor? Get Chen off somewhere."

She looked at him oddly, hesitating, her mouth parted as though to ask a question. He kissed her and when he had drawn away she give him a glance of surprise that was far more startled than he had expected from her.

"*De bonne foi?*" she murmured. "Is it meant?"

He nodded. He waited, watching as she went off and joined Monsieur Chen. A few minutes later she and M. Chen were walking across the lawn toward a group of people. When he could no longer see them, he ran across the driveway and entered the waiting Isota.

"*Tsou pa*, let's go."

The Chinese driver turned. "Wait for Missie?" he asked.

"No. We go alone."

THE ancient builders of Soochow were men of ambitious plans. They devised a proverb *Heaven above and Soochow below*—and translated it into stone and water. They gave the city eight watergates like Heaven, and they made it square like Earth. They made Soochow the Venice of the Orient, threading it with canals and alternating streets spanned and linked by high arching bridges. But the Emperor Builders, the Tungs who built the towers, the Sungs who laid the roads and the Mings who built the bridges, had no eye for modern conveniences. Within the ivy-veined, thousand-years-old walls guarding the city, no vehicles could pass. Soochow's streets and bridges were too narrow.

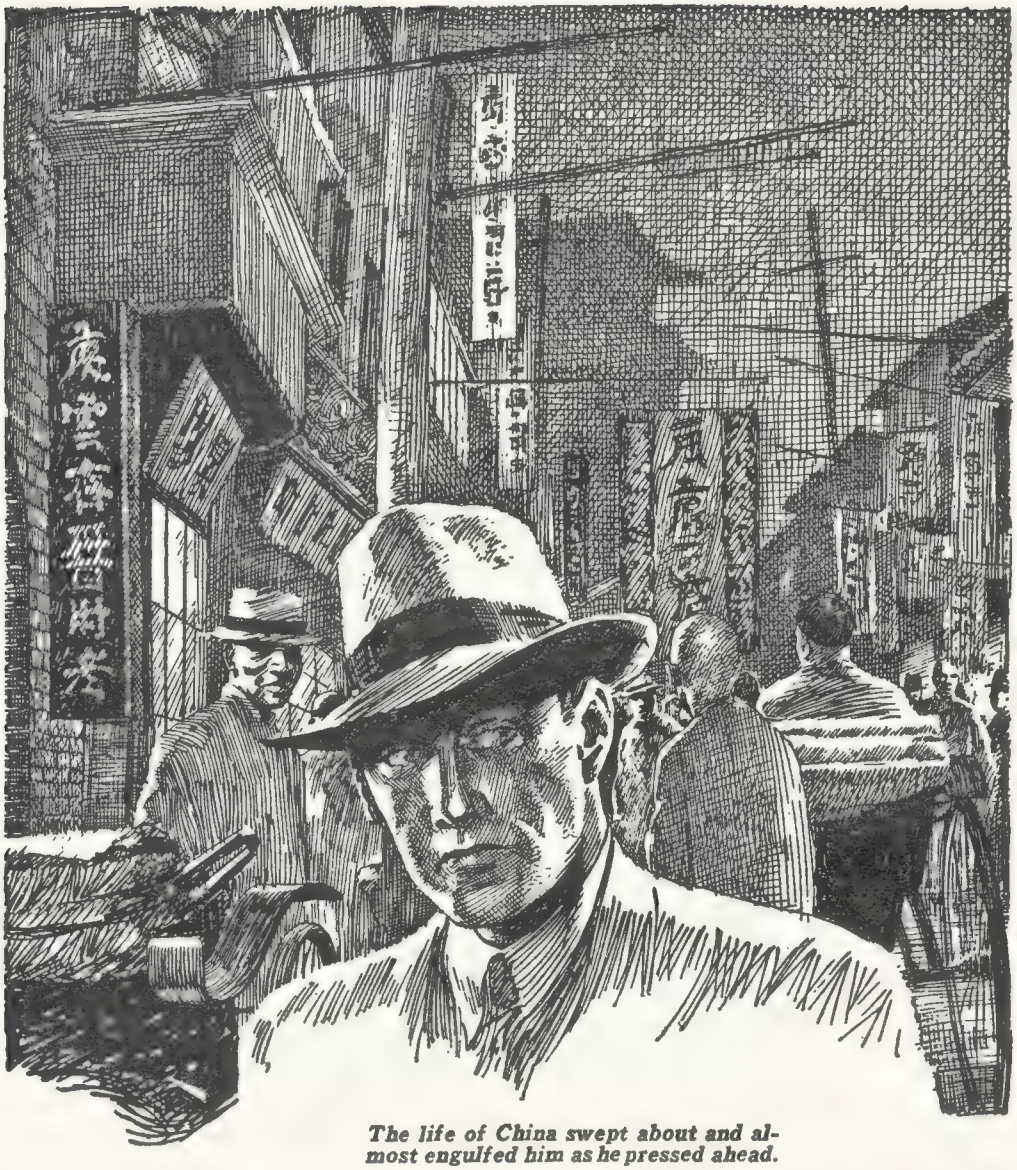
As Armour approached the city in the borrowed Isota, sunset was beginning to glaze the tent-like tile roofs and peaks of the city. The yellow grew mellow and tinted, like old silk. The car passed the fifty-three arch Precious Girdle Bridge, the Old Customs House and slowed its speed on Horse Road as the tiered South Gate loomed against the reddened sky.

The car halted outside the gate and he got out, sending the car back to Shanghai. He had decided to take the railroad back. Turning, he walked toward the city wall which stood like a massive curtain of thick brown earth carefully faced with gray brick.

He felt in his pocket to make sure that the marriage scroll was still safe, and the pistol which he had carried about through the afternoon without really realizing it. He felt satisfied that no one seemed to have followed him from Shanghai, neither Etoile, nor Monsieur Chen, nor Quinto, nor Chen's sport-clad and adhesive Dogs of Fu. Before leaving the city he had stopped at the New Astor, trying to reach Adrian. She had refused to see him and to answer her phone so he had left a note of explanation. It was a cry in the wilderness, ineffectual, helpless.

The city gate towered above him now, its crenelated shoulder, its triple-tiered curving roofs sweeping the sky. Once he was within the city it was like the dream-like passing from day into twilight: a crowded scurrying, the tattered evening filled with highlights and shadows and rising noises. He entered streets where the life of China swept about and almost engulfed him as he pressed ahead, passing under nail-studded gates, finding his way through passages darkened by matting flung from housetop to housetop. Coolies carrying the city's traffic of litter chairs crowded him against walls. He caught a glimpse of the people within the covered chairs; an old bearded man who seemed lost in contemplation, a girl in pink satin that added luster to her secret glance.

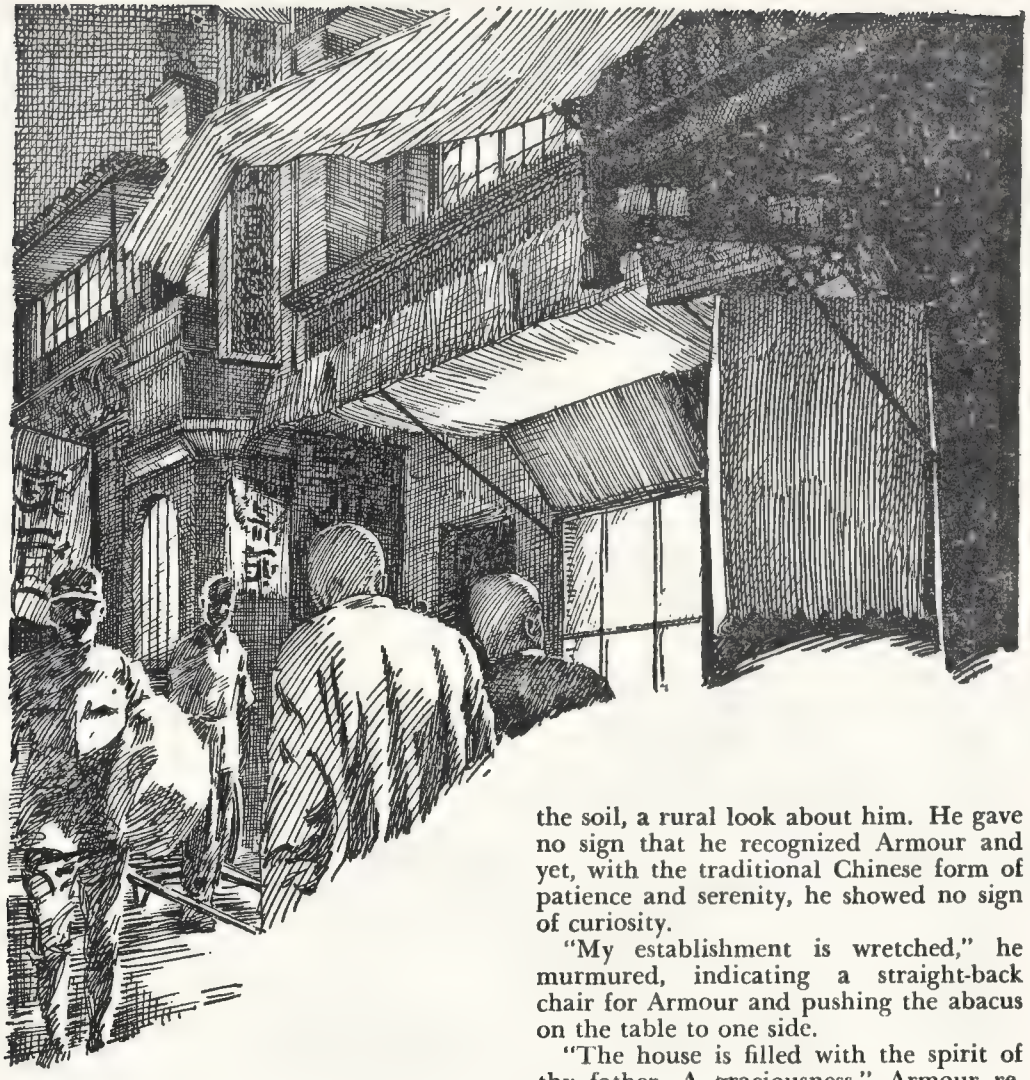
He passed near a leaning pagoda thumbing the fading sky, then the two-story, brick Beamless Temple. As he glanced in through the temple gates a curious stirring of memory aroused him, a feeling of familiarity that was vague and without detail. He stopped for a moment, staring at the arched roof and colored tiles of the temple. It was as if the temple or something within it wanted to tell him something, but the speaking of it was in a language his ear had no key for. "Imagination," he said to himself.



The life of China swept about and almost engulfed him as he pressed ahead.

He went on, entering a street called, "Place for Liberating Animals to Acquire Virtue." An old man gathering manure and feeding it into a basket he carried on his shoulder tried to borrow a cigarette from him. The street became crowded with shops and stalls. Here, among the shops festooned with carved woodwork and hung with banners brushed with bold cryptic characters, he found the Seven Piece Luck Restaurant. He hesitated before it, eyes hungry searching for some sign of familiarity, but meeting only the malevolent gaze of the *Ch'ih wen,* the green glazed hornless Dragons of the Edge, eyeing him from the roof.

THE noise and movement and moist garlic-laden air of the restaurant pressed against him as a solid thing as he entered. There were boys bearing hot towels to



customers, men running steaming trays of food to tables. Here, too, there was nothing that touched his memory. A waiter met him.

"I look for Mr. Liu," Armour said.

He followed the *chao-tai* through the restaurant, then across a dark courtyard to a large, noiseful room, the kitchen. A middle-aged Chinese who had been seated at a table near the huge stove rose as he approached.

"Mr. Liu?" Armour asked.

The man nodded. He had more the appearance of a Northerner than that of a Soochow citizen. There was something of the soil, a rural look about him. He gave no sign that he recognized Armour and yet, with the traditional Chinese form of patience and serenity, he showed no sign of curiosity.

"My establishment is wretched," he murmured, indicating a straight-back chair for Armour and pushing the abacus on the table to one side.

"The house is filled with the spirit of thy father. A graciousness," Armour replied.

"If I pour out my heart."

"I have troubled you."

He studied Liu's face carefully. There was nothing in the man's solid features nor in the betraying harshness of his Shensi accent that rang a bell in his own mind. He began to feel confused and he yearned to cut the polite formalities short, to ask questions and to receive answers. Still, he held himself in check until the "honor tea" had been brought.

Both he and Mr. Liu sipped the tea in silence. Observing the ancient manners which persisted even in modern life, through revolution and counter-revolution

and war and hunger, Mr. Liu made no show of curiosity or annoyance. He seemed to concentrate on the ceremony. He could sit here like this the entire night, perhaps passing polite reflections, speaking of weather and interlarding his comments with appropriate quotations from the Sage.

Armour finished his tea, praised its flavor, then drew the scroll from his pocket. "We meet again?" he said to Liu. It was both inquiry and statement.

"*Shao chien,* I have not seen you for some time," the Chinese replied, bowing slightly, his bland eyes watching Armour's fingers and the scroll. His face remained a bronze mask, emotionless, eternal, the color and texture of the earth in his North country.

"We've met here?"

"In this miserable establishment of my fathers," Liu answered. "But you have changed much. The gods have taken flesh from you."

His heart leaped in spite of himself and he fought within his mind, seeking some telltale remembrance of this man.

"Your wife, my second niece is well?" Liu asked.

Armour failed to answer immediately. For a moment he sat with his hands stilled upon his lap, his body motionless, almost as though he were falling into the Chinese habit of retreating into serenity. His senses vaguely felt, heard and watched the clatter in the smoke-filled kitchen. His attention rested on the huge stove built of plastered brick and gaily decorated with painted flowers and historical scenes. A small image of Ts'ao Chum, the Stove God, peered down complacently at him from a niche in the chimney breast.

"My niece is well?" Liu repeated.

"Yes. In Shanghai." He now unrolled a few inches of the scroll and handed it to Liu. "Are you familiar with it?"

The Chinese set it upon the table without reading it. "This miserable one was honored," he replied pleasantly.. "Master of Ceremony at the Red Affair." He smiled, questioningly.

Armour pushed his chair back and rose. The noisy kitchen, reeking with the smell of cooking and garlic, oppressed him. The interview had begun to unnerve him with its qualities of the ridiculous. He had not the thinnest recollection of Mr. Liu or any part of his restaurant. He had no memory at all of the Red Affair or marriage.

"Where is the *Chia,* Willow House?" he asked.

Again Mr. Liu's face showed no change of expression, no surprise because he had inquired for the house where he and Etoile had lived for six years. Liu rose with him, saying, "*Tao chia t'i*—inquire for peace. Will send servant to light your way. Willow House is beyond Chang Gate and night is velvet."

"No, never mind," Armour put in quickly. "I'll go tomorrow."

A boy slid the paper door leading to the courtyard open for them.

"May you have level peace on my road," Liu said.

Armour smiled, answering, "Your business and family prosper."

"You will not go to the *chia* tonight?"

"No, I'm tired. I'll stay nearby, at an inn. I'll go tomorrow."

"One does not sleep in the city."

Armour shrugged. The cumulative impact of the day's events left him feeling suddenly weary. He wanted rest and sleep before going to Willow House; he wanted his mind to be clear, his thoughts fresh before he went there.

They came to the outer courtyard and paused at the street gate. Mr. Liu handed him a small paper package, and bowing, murmured, "May my niece bring you a succession of honorable sons."

After he was alone in the street he paused near a shop and examined the package. He frowned, then began to laugh, softly and uncontrollably. The package contained one red-tinted hardboiled egg and six chestnuts—China's symbol of fertility.

CHAPTER XVI

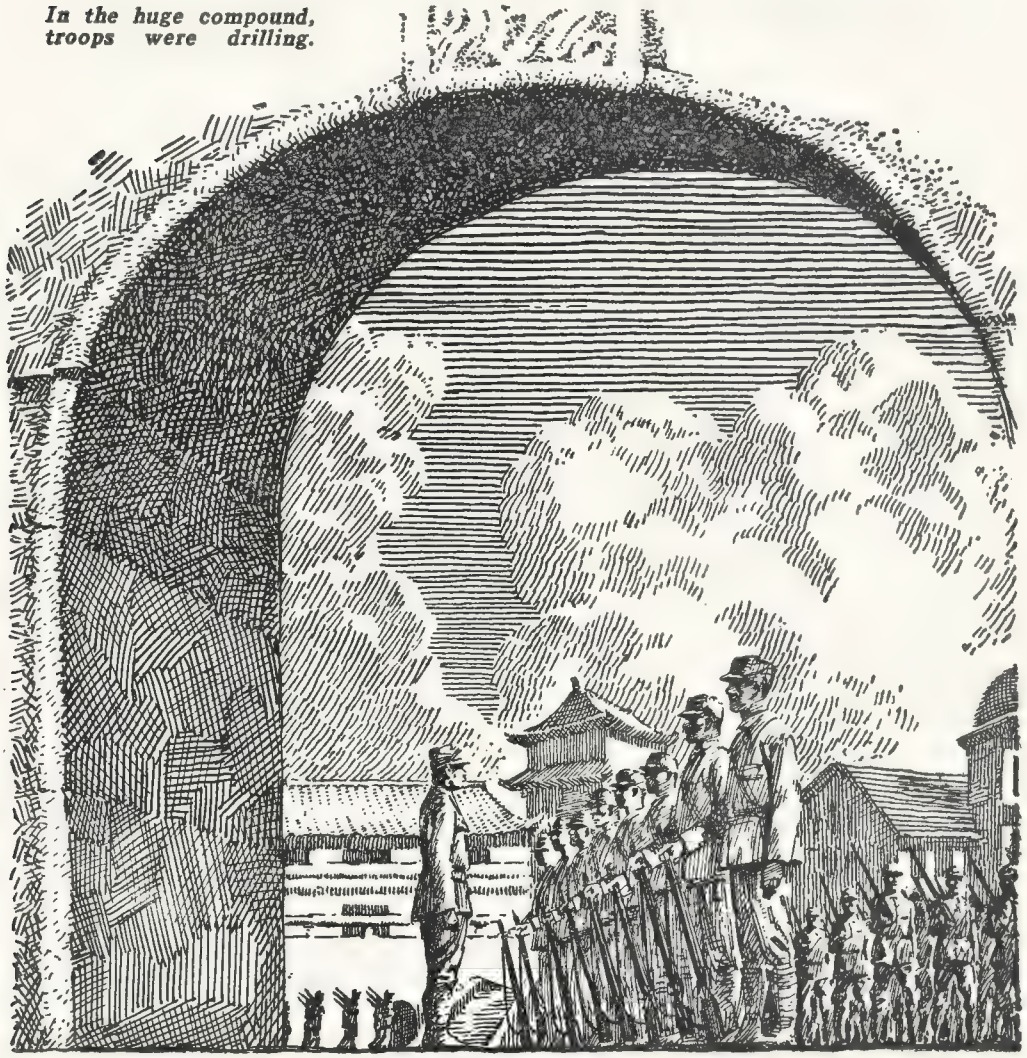
MOUNTAIN OF VIRTUE

AS MR. LIU had prophesied, Armour did not sleep well. He tossed fitfully through the early night upon a flea-inhabited *k'ang* in an inn room that faced upon one of Soochow's more odorous canals. With darkness, a sampan on the water below became a gambling establishment doing business in fantan and finger games. The

noise from the canal grew in intensity during the night.

At dawn, the myriad city sounds of China invaded his room and completely routed his sleep. He was awakened by the crowing of cocks kept by thousands of families to offset the high cost of living. Then the "rise-body-sound" blared by a bugle in a nearby military barracks colored the dawn. Little by little the sounds gathered: the preposterous braying of donkeys, a town crier somewhere near, shouts of newsboys straining against the metallic harshness of newscasts issuing from government loudspeakers posted above street corners. As he rose and washed, the din increased. Somewhere outside, the staccato bursting of firecrackers announced the opening of a new shop; cooks in a restaurant near the inn beat their frying pans to attract customers; in the boats below his window rivermen had begun their day, poling their crafts upon the sleek water, chanting, *"Han, ho, han, ho."*

Leaving the inn, he stood in the street for a minute surveying its length, watchful if anyone might be waiting to follow him. Finally he set out for the Northwest Gate. As he walked, his eyes scanned each house, every turning with alert expectant



In the huge compound, troops were drilling.

interest, as though expecting the opening of a door or the appearance of a face to stir something within him.

He headed into the ageless, bustling turmoil of urban China and it was like walking into a wave of sound and color and smells. The city was compact and boisterous as a city can only be when it has existed within walls for centuries. Soochow had seen the tides of history wash Emperors and Dynasties through its gates and had seen waves carry them out again into oblivion: the T'angs, the Sung, the Mings, and always there was a new tide, restless and devouring. There had been the Tai'pings who burned part of the city and Chinese Gordon who drove them out; later the republicans of Sun Yat Sen and then the Japanese. At one time the entire population had moved out and built themselves a new city with wooden walls because the old city had so filled with unmanageable robbers and rebels.

Even now, as he went through the damp narrow streets he knew that the residual atmosphere and spirit of those ancient and lawless days still clung to the city with hoary insistence. Only the army regulars in their mustard-colored uniforms and an occasional modern-minded official wearing his high-collared, black Sun Yat Sen jacket dated Soochow.

He stopped at the government *yamen* for a moment, inquiring for more accurate directions to Willow House. Troops were drilling within the huge compound crowded with administration buildings, courtrooms and offices. He was tempted to visit the administration offices and check whether a marriage, Etoile's and his, had been registered here; whether his name lay upon a book here, mute and graphic evidence of another life. It was most unlikely, he reflected. Except in Shanghai and Hong Kong it was not customary to register marriages; dinner and an announcement were sufficient to satisfy the gods of China.

The steady traffic, moving into market, thinned after he passed beneath the great Northwest Gate, crossed the moat-like canal girdling the outer skin of the city, and went through a modern, somewhat suburban district of fine Chinese houses and gardens. A half mile beyond the walls he came to Willow House.

The *chia* or estate was indeed well named. It was set back in the bend of a canal and framed by large stands of willow and camphor trees. A wind-screen of bambo trees shielded its north walls. The house roofs were deeply curved and more highly decorated than those of North China; from the ridge pole a deep band of ornaments terminated in *ch'ih wei* or owl-tailed fish put there to protect the house against fire. He stared at the house and its surrounding wall without once feeling a twinge of recognition. The place left his mind utterly cold. There was no repetition of the tantalizing sensations that had crowded his thoughts when he had first seen Etoile in Shanghai or the stirring of vague recollections which he had experienced on first entering Soochow.

HE CLIMBED and descended the arc of a moon bridge spanning the canal and approached the house. Two snarling stone dragon-lions, the traditional Dogs of Fu, flanked each side of the outer gate. He glanced curiously at the garden wall topped by a fifty foot, writhing dragon of carved wood; its head protected the gate and in its mouth rested that mysterious ball of unknown significance found in the teeth of all Imperial Dragons. He began to feel frantic. He knew he ought to remember it, if he had ever seen it. It was one of the most perfect dragon walls he had ever looked at in the Orient.

A young, grinning gate-boy let him in the courtyard, then ran off to search for the *kuan-shi-ti* or Number One. Armour's alert glance moved about restlessly, seeking a familiar object, a tree, a curve of a door that might tell him something. The house remained familiar and unfamiliar. He had seen others like it and in that sense knew it. Its layout was simple: a series of alternating courtyards and buildings, each with its own garden and pools. It had probably once been the home of a Manchu official.

The *kuan-shi-ti* appeared. He was a man in his forties. He looked lean and hard. Nodding briskly, he faced Armour as a man facing an equal. A pleasant, friendly smile touched his solid lips.

"Happy you return. We very worried," he said in passable English.

Armour simply stared. A sensation of frustration began to close in upon him.

He wanted to claw at the shreds of his memory, to piece something out of what was not there. The lean Chinese stood before him like a terrifying dream; a face that meant nothing to him, a voice that spoke of friendship and respect which had no grounding in his mind.

He regained his control and said, "This *is* Willow House?"

The Chinese looked about swiftly as though verifying his surroundings. He appeared surprised by the question.

A grinning gate-boy let him in the courtyard.

"Willow House," he nodded.

"Your name?"

The startled expression again. "Pu Tao," the Chinese replied. "Pu Tao." He repeated it as though Armour should have known it and he was now humoring him. Then he added, "East Chair Lady is not back. Has gone to Shanghai, search for you. But household is always waiting you. Please come."

Armour followed him into the first large building consisting of reception rooms, a large hall and library. The large hall impressed him immediately as being comfortably furnished, but it was not a room he had ever been in before.

"Nothing changed. Just like when you here," Pu Tao said as though asking for confirmation.

Armour shrugged, confused.

"Will send tea," the Chinese said.

"Wait."

The Chinese halted at the door.

"Who am I?" After he had said it, he realized how foolish it must have sounded.

The Chinese stared at him for a moment without expression, then his features swiftly broke into a wide Lao-Tsean grin. "You Number One husband," he said, and backed through the door.

He stiffened for an instant. "Mad! Mad!" he muttered as he watched the servant cross the inner-garden court where oddly-shaped stones were piled in combinations that resembled a miniature view of the Rain Flower Hills near Nanking. He fought down an irascible urge to run from the house, rushing into the street, shouting like a gibbering idiot. His coming to Soochow, which he had thought would bring clarity to his mind, was rapidly to become a grotesque nightmare intent on destroying the last vestiges of his sanity.

Rigidly controlling his runaway nerves, he turned his attention to the room and went from object to object within it, eagerly and desperately seeking one familiar thing, like a man might grasp for twigs in a tornado. He glanced at the Sung paintings hung upon the walls. Nothing. A small table of teakwood held a Bronze Buddha of the Wei Dynasty. Against one wall a long narrow curved table of richly carved mahogany held a model Chinese Junk with furled sails and a display of rocks oddly shaped and colored. He crossed the room to examine a

The poster offered 10,000 pesos for someone—dead or alive.

photograph that hung from a wall in its bamboo frame like a glaring error in taste. Oddly, it was a reward poster of New World vintage. It offered 10,000 pesos for someone—dead or alive. The name of the person had been cut out. Below the offer was a photograph of a thirteen-year-old boy weighed down by an assortment of bandoleers, rifles, pistols and a huge peon sombrero. The poster was dated: *1916, Juarez, Mexico.*

HE HEARD a chuckling behind him. "You admire it, eh? I was then nothing but a large baby."

He whirled around staring at Quinto. In that first instant of stunned recognition he felt as if he were only conscious of the cigarette dangling loosely from the huge Mexican's relaxed lips, then he became aware of the smudgy humor in the man's eyes. It angered him.

"So, you finally agree to sight-see, eh Señor?" Quinto smiled, moving from the doorway into the room.

He took a step toward Quinto. Mixed outraged anger and confusion and the bitterness of betrayal roared through his mind, highlighting the ludicrousness of the situation; the parts of the past two days tumbled into place, simple, direct, lucid. He had been used as a pawn.

"You arranged this?" he demanded coldly.

"Señor, you will be calm," Quinto urged. "You see, I am calm." The big man made an expressive gesture with his hands, a mute shrug as if to say the affair was something he could not help himself.

Armour spoke irritably. "All right, I'm calm."

"It was the only way to bring you here," Quinto said.

The big man exasperated Armour with the simple directness of his speech and actions. Quinto dropped comfortably into a Cantonese easy chair and, removing his shoes and faded GI sox, began to exercise his broad blunt toes with complete concentration on them. The toes moved, stretched, crouched and extended themselves like inarticulate mimes. Armour suddenly realized that he, too, had begun to follow the movement of Quinto's toes with childish fascination. Quinto smiled at the toes admiringly.

"The toes enjoy asserting themselves," the Mexican observed thoughtfully. "But to move them like this is not quite as satisfactory as when Mountain of Virtue rubs them. She is magnificent, yes?" He sighed. "Why didn't you bring her to Soochow?"

It took Armour a second for the name to register. "Who?" he asked.

"Virtue. She is Etoile. It is her Shanghai name."

"Etoile—"

"*Ayi.* Mountain of Virtue." Quinto beamed. "She is *magnifica.* Did you notice, she is *hsiao-chieh.* This kind of woman is very rare in China; there is only one every hundred years. But she is also capable. She was a full colonel in the Army during the war."

Armour sat down slowly, then forming his words carefully, as though framing the conclusion to a long and involved thought process, he said, "The marriage business was faked?"

Quinto nodded. "Etoile is an imagination."

"A what?"

"*Si claro.* She is something Gimiendo Quinto has invented. Mountain of Virtue is real, but Etoile is but a name we keep for her in Shanghai and Hong Kong. It is her Milk Name." He tossed his cigarette aside carelessly. "You do not mind of course. It is very important that you find your past and my T'ang Bronzes; it is so important I first lend you a little of my own history so that you are comfortable in Shanghai. When I become afraid that you lose interest, then I lend you my—" He paused and began searching his pockets for tobacco, then, "She is beautiful, eh?"

"Your wife?" Armour asked.

"Did you know she is a Soochow girl?" Quinto went on, avoiding the query. "All the beautiful women in China are Soochow girls, even if they are not born in Soochow. But she is bona fide. I won her from an American pilot many years ago in Sianfu. A most interesting poker game, *claro*?"

Armour frowned. He felt tremendously relaxed but still a little confused and angry.

"But I'd seen her before," he put in. "I remember her from somewhere, though I can't place it."

"Feng Yang."

"At the Mission?"

"*Si, hombre.* While you were delirious at the mission hospital Virtue visited for a day. She brought pictures so that we could identify you."

Armour nodded thoughtfully. What Quinto said seemed to fit, but he did not like the way it had been used. "I don't like how you used her against me," he said bluntly. "It's a hell of a way to move a man; to separate him from his wife."

"Your wife is angry, eh?"

"Angry—she's turned against me."

"Ah, it is something we can repair."

"We were to have left for Hong Kong today."

Quinto blinked his eyes philosophically. "I am one who does not think your wife will go without you," he murmured.

"You don't know her."

"But she will not leave, I say it."

Armour raised his brows. "Are you holding her?"

"But no—you are."

"How?"

"She is a stubborn woman."

"Stubbornness isn't enough."

THE Chinese, Pu Tao, entered the room bringing in a tray with empty tea bowls, a plate of lotus seeds and a half-filled bottle with a Spanish brandy label.

"It is *Pedro Domecq,*" Quinto said. "It sometimes comes through the Portuguese

at Macao. It is best for breakfast if you pour it over pomegranate seeds and mash it up like oatmeal."

The Mexican poured a brandy for himself, one for Armour and another for the Chinese. Then, as though disturbed by the quantity of liquor remaining in the bottle, he added more to his bowl, filling it to the brim. "It was sent by Uncle Liu," he said. "You saw him last night at Seven Piece Luck Restaurant, yes?"

"Didn't look like a restaurateur," Armour put in.

"Uncle Liu? No. He was once a guerrilla fighter from the North who was posted here to keep us informed of things in this part of China. And Pu Tao," He nodded toward the Chinese, "also *guerrillero.*"

His glance went from Quinto's broad tolerant face to Pu Tao's, then back to Quinto, and to the photograph of Quinto in the reward poster. He was beginning to piece together the Mexican's unorthodox methods, to understand them. The ruse which had forced him to leave Adrian and come to Soochow had been devised by a master strategist. It was so typically Chinese in its unexpected involutions that he stared at Quinto, wondering how much of China the man had absorbed in his years here, and how much of the West he had lost. The trick itself was like an Oriental painting highlighted only here and there with deft suggestive strokes. Etoile, or Mountain of Virtue, with her touch of Mission School demureness, was a brush stroke worthy of a Sung artist; the sketched in background merely suggesting to Adrian and himself that he might have been a collaborationist had been just sharp enough to convince and irritate him. The timing of the entire ruse had balance and a touch of genius, but a strange Oriental kind of inverted genius which said everything with almost nothing.

He did not like it and he said to Quinto, "My plane leaves Linghwa airport this afternoon at five. I plan to be there."

The big man seemed undisturbed by his tone. He merely shrugged diffidently. "You like *pitan*?" he asked. "They are very old eggs." To Pu Tao: "You will bring one egg please."

"Have you got a vehicle that'll take me to Shanghai?" Armour demanded after the guerrilla-servant had gone.

"*Espera,* wait. We are now close to this thing of the T'angs. Do you still believe these Bronzes are ghost-written?"

"No."

Quinto's lips parted, surprised. "*Por qué*—why do you change?"

"I remember having seen one of them, but I can't recall where or when."

"*Hola!*" Quinto slapped his knee happily. "We are now closer. Your appearance in Soochow will bring Monsieur Chen here. You will stay, eh?"

Armour shook his head.

"But it is important," Quinto persisted.

"I don't give a damn. I'm going to Shanghai."

"You begin to be like the modern diplomat. It is the style now to *get tough,* eh?"

Armour smiled coldly. "I don't think the T'angs are as important as my being in Shanghai this afternoon. In fact, I should take you along to explain."

Quinto shot him an exasperated look and tapered it off with a swallow of brandy. "You forget, Señor," he said in a solemn tone, "it is not the T'angs, nor you, nor Quinto which is important; it is the use these things are put to. In Nanking there are negotiations—"

"They won't come off," Armour replied dryly. "I'd like to see them come off, but China isn't brought together that easily over a tea table, even if you use rare Bronzes for bait."

The Mexican shrugged. "What does it matter, one negotiation more or less?" He raised a deprecating hand. "If this one does not come off, there will always be others; maybe this year, maybe next year. But at this moment, and between us, it is important that Monsieur Chen *does* come to Soochow. Once I begin to know what the relationship between you and Chen is, I shall know everything, *sabe*?"

"I've already talked to Chen. He isn't saying."

Quinto sat up suddenly, his bare feet and broad toes gripping the tile floor. "Here?" he asked.

"In Shanghai."

THE Mexican relaxed again. "I am one who believes the relationship between you and Señor Chen is one thing in Shanghai, another thing in Soochow." His brown smoky eyes stared thoughtfully at

his toes. "I have a philosophy about Chen which makes this belief," he said. "In China one always starts life and action with a philosophy, not a motive. Señor Chen is half Chinese and half European. He is confused inside. When he is faced with a Chinese crisis he is liable to make a Western mistake from force of habit or because of the confusion in him from trying to mix two different cultures . . ."

Pu Tao came in again, this time with a plate on which one egg had been thinly sliced. The *pitan,* or ancient preserved egg, which the Chinese plant in lime soil in dated rows, and dig up years later, had an amber-green color and an odor like old sulphurous cheese.

"For these, I have learned to have a passion," Quinto explained, offering Armour a slice. "But they are now hard to find in China. Everyone is too hungry to leave eggs stand their proper time."

"No, thanks." Armour shook his head. He had never learned to like them.

With his mouth crammed and slowly masticating a mixture of egg, lotus seeds and cognac, Quinto settled back and gazed at the deeply scored carving of an historical scene upon the large transverse beam of the ceiling. He continued talking as though reading from the beam.

He said, "In Shanghai, Señor Chen wished to frighten you and to bribe you into leaving China. It was done with an air of friendship. There was a little of earth and a little of water in his method. It was in harmony with China-ways, *shan shui.* But when you disappointed him and came to Soochow, it became another thing. I am thinking that if you wait a little, he will approach you in the wrong way; he will forget the Golden Means and the old proverb—*going beyond is as bad as not going far enough.* I think Chen will go beyond, *sabe?*"

"How?"

Quinto shrugged carelessly. "We wait," he said, "and perhaps devise a small trap."

Armour smiled indifferently. "Do you forget you're a foreigner, too?" he asked. "You might make the mistake."

Quinto shot him a preposterous glance. "Chen does his thinking alone," he said. "But with Quinto it is not so. There is Virtue who has a very beautiful brain, and if you wish to offer advice—"

"Why'd you drag me here rather than to Nanking or some other town?"

Quinto did not answer immediately. He began building himself a cigarette and when it was completed and hung from his lips, he said, "Señor Chen did not try to shoot you in Shanghai. There it was only important to threaten and bribe you. It is when you are somewhere between Nanking and Shanghai, where the T'ang Bronzes disappeared, that you worry Chen seriously. I picked Soochow because Chen has been here often and because I think maybe you have been here. Does Soochow make your mind think back?"

Armour stood up. "Not enough," he said.

"Perhaps if we make a tour of the city?"

"Some other time." He glanced at the reward poster for the thirteen-year-old Mexican boy. "I'm going. You want to come to Shanghai?"

Quinto shook his head. Armour hesitated. He wanted to take the big man with him, have him explain to Adrian what had happened, but there was no way of forcing him. He might use his gun, but he wondered if Quinto would respond to a gun. It also surprised him that the Mexican showed no indication of wanting to hold him here even if he went alone.

He walked to the paper and lattice door leading to an anteroom and the outer courtyard and hesitated there, glancing back. Quinto had not moved. He sat there indifferently, seemingly engrossed in his magnificent feet.

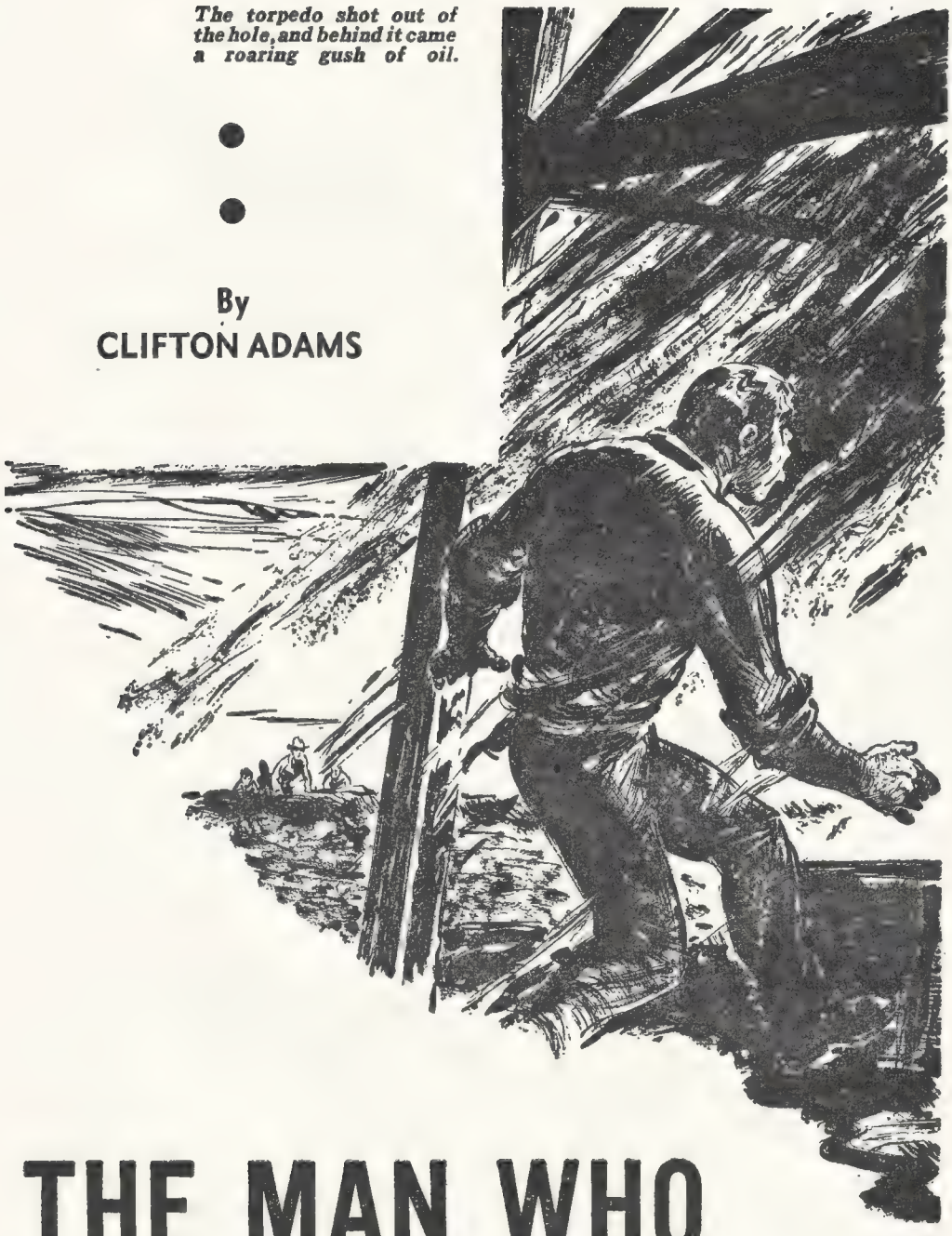
"I would not go, Mr. Armour."

He turned quickly to meet the voice which had come from within the anteroom. His startled glance went out against Etoile—Mountain of Virtue. She stood there in the center of the room, fingers of one hand toying indolently with the blossoms of a dwarf plum tree which stood in a bowl upon a small table. In that first instant, she reminded him of one of those delicately polished jade figurines of classic Chinese women. She was wearing a jacket of lake silk embroidered with *Pa an hsien,* the eight emblems of Taoist immortality; and in place of a skirt, the traditional trousers of cream silk. She resembled a very sensitive Peiping jade—except for the dainty pearl-handled pistol in her other hand.

(To be concluded)

The torpedo shot out of the hole, and behind it came a roaring gush of oil.

By
CLIFTON ADAMS



THE MAN WHO DIDN'T LIKE TEXAS

ILLUSTRATED BY CARL PFEUFER

WE WAS sitting out on the plank-walk listening to Big Homer shoot up the Red Dog Saloon. He'd let out a laugh like a hyena with a hot-foot, then he'd blast away with that big hog-leg of his. Bottles would break and that bunch of roughnecks would flinch—they could just see all that whiskey going to waste.

There never was a oil boom that didn't draw enough freaks to fill a circus tent, but this one at New Pecos got more'n its share: Big Homer's idea of fun was to get roarin' on red-eye and shoot up something. It wasn't a thing you'd pay much attention to except New Pecos wasn't a

week old yet, and the Red Dog was our only saloon. In fact, it was our only *building*. The rest of the town wasn't nothin' but a few flappin' tents and about a foot of red-clay mud.

"Eeeeoow!" Big Homer yelled again, and his hog-leg roared.

Shooter Haggerty, sittin' next to me, had been countin' the shots on his fingers. "That's five," Shooter drawled, and pulled his big frame off the plankwalk. "Soon's he lets the next one go, we'll rush him before he can re-load."

The rest of the boys agreed that was the thing to do. They would of agreed, no difference what they thought. A man that handles nitroglycerin the way Shooter does gets a lot of respect around a oil town.

We was all waitin' for that last shot, then we was goin' to rush the place. That's when I seen the Bull Moose for the first time.

At first I figured a cloud passed over the sun, or something. When I looked up and seen what it was, I almost swallowed a new set of teeth.

I don't know how tall he was, but it put a crick in my neck to look up at him. His shoulders was bulgin' a heavy wool shirt, and his dirty khakis was groanin' at the seams. He had the kind of face a four-year-old would thump out of wet clay, and his skull was thick with half-inch bristles that looked like they'd been hammered in one at a time.

He glared at the bunch of field-hands like he might start cracking skulls on general principles. Then he gave a disgusted snort and started toward the saloon, shovin' the boys aside like a bulldozer goin' through a wheat patch.

Me, I wouldn't of said nothin'. But Shooter Haggerty, he's different. He's kind of friendly like most Texans are, so he says, "Partner, if I was you, I'd wait a little spell before I went in there. That Big Homer's still got one bullet left."

This big geezer looked at Shooter like if it wasn't so much trouble, he'd just bust him one for not minding his own business. Then he let out another snort and stomped right in the saloon door.

We heard Big Homer yell, "Eeeeoow!" Then that big pistol roared again. We figured the big, moose-faced stranger had a short stay in New Pecos.

"Come on!" Shooter yelled. "Rush him!" We all made for the door, worryin' about what the hell we're goin' to do with a corpse that big, and all of a sudden the swingin' doors fly open and Big Homer come twistin' through the air like a string of tools from a wild well, and landed *fop* in the clay mud. A second later his pistol whizzed through the door and landed beside him.

WE STOOD looking at two hundred pounds of unconscious roustabout. Shooter Haggerty said somethin' like, "Hurmph!" He stooped over quick, and grabbed Big Homer's pistol. He poked five blunt, heavy .45 slugs out of their chambers and rattled them in his hand.

Maybe to Shooter Haggerty, a guy that shoves nitroglycerin around every day, it didn't mean so much, but it took me and the rest of the boys five minutes to get our hearts to beatin' again. That lousy roustabout crossed us up. He re-loaded after his fifth shot. I guess we was all thinkin' about how we'd look stretched out with .45 holes in us, if that Bull Moose hadn't walked in first.

Right then the Bull Moose was a hero—for awhile, anyway.

We all crowded in the saloon to tell him so. The place was a mess. Bottles busted, whiskey all over the floor, and the air full of gunsmoke. The Bull Moose was stompin' around behind the bar—he may have another name but nobody bothered to use it—and when we came in he looked up, growled, and went on with whatever he was doin'.

He found some whiskey that Big Homer had missed, and set it on the bar. He got one of the big schooners they served beer in, poured it full of whiskey, then he turned it up and started drinkin'. He didn't bat an eye, and he didn't stop drinkin' until it was all gone—and when he'd killed it, he smacked his lips, slammed the schooner back on the bar and filled it up again.

Nobody said a thing. Their eyes popped, and they waited for the Bull Moose to fall flat on his face.

He didn't even belch.

He stood there at the bar like there wasn't another man in a thousand miles. I was beginnin' to think the same thing.

But, like I said, Shooter Haggerty is a guy that's full of the old southern hospitality. He thumped over to where the Bull Moose was, grinned at him, and stuck out his mitt. "Partner," Shooter said, "you sure took care of that drunk roustabout. I'm proud to know you—my name's Shooter Haggerty."

The Bull Moose looked at Shooter's hand like it was in the last stage of leprosy, then he growled and turned back to his whiskey. By that time Hack Wilson, the bartender, was settin' out what was left of the booze, and the boys began to gather around. Shooter's grin slipped a little when he found out his hand was danglin' in the air and nobody was going to take it. But he'd started something, and he decided to play it out.

"You look like a oilman," Shooter said. "But I don't think I've seen you around Texas fields before."

The Bull Moose grunted.

"You been workin' up north maybe," Shooter tried again.

Maybe it was the whiskey that loosened the Bull Moose's tongue. He looked down at Shooter—Shooter was a head taller than most men, but the Bull Moose had to look down at him.

"I worked everywhere," Bull Moose growled. "Venezuela, Mexico, Borneo. Anywhere there's oil."

Well, Shooter's a guy that never got out of Texas, and he don't aim to. Shooter figured the only people that ever left Texas was crazy people and the ones that was chased over the border by a posse. But Shooter was goin' to be polite, even if he had to tell a lie about it.

"Them places must be pretty nice," Shooter said.

The Bull Moose looked at him like he thought he was nuts. "They stink," he growled disgustedly.

"Well." Shooter brightened up. "That's too bad. I guess you're glad to get away from them places. How do you like Texas?"

Of course there ain't but one answer to that. There may be people that don't like Texas, but they don't tell Texans about it. The Bull Moose turned up the schooner of whiskey, downed it and wiped his lips. "It stinks," he said.

You can get the same effect by startin' a gun fight in church. The boys jerked their heads up and their eyes popped open like they thought their ears was playin' tricks on them.

Shooter stopped a drink halfway to his mouth, his arm stiff like it had been frozen that way. His mouth was turned up the way it had been before—but he wasn't grinning. He set the glass down slowly, not making a sound. I could see the muscles bunch in his shoulders and I looked for him to sail into the Bull Moose right there. Personally, I didn't think Shooter would have a chance, but I knew that wouldn't stop him from trying.

If the Bull Moose knew what was going on, he didn't show it. He poured another half a bottle into the schooner and downed it. I wondered what was holding him up. He glared at the boys like they was a bunch of brats that ought to be in bed, then he stomped out of the place. He didn't even stagger.

The place was still quiet. The boys was looking at Shooter, and Shooter was looking at the place where Bull Moose had been. He didn't look mad now. He just looked puzzled. He kept shaking his head and saying, "He don't like Texas," over and over like he couldn't believe it.

Whatever Shooter decided to do about it was all right with the boys. Me, I'd be just as happy if I never saw the Bull Moose again. But I wasn't that lucky.

THE next day word got out that my rig was ready to start drilling. When I got out there and found out the boss of the rig was nobody but the Bull Moose, I almost turned around and started looking for another way to make a living.

But I didn't. It was a good thing too, because it turned out to be the easiest job of roughnecking I ever had.

One thing you could say about Bull Moose, he was a good oilman. He damn near dug that well by hisself—and it wasn't long before I began to see just why he didn't have much use for people, it didn't make any difference if they was in Mexico or Borneo or what. The Bull Moose was just too much of a man.

One day he was coming out of the hole to take a core. Me and Sid Harrison was gruntin' and sweatin' with the tongs, and the Bull Moose was standin' by the drawworks lookin' disgusted. When Sid gave

him the rope to put on the power so we could break the joint, the Bull Moose shoved him away and growled. He grabbed the rope in both hands, and pulled. His big shoulders bulged once and, crack, the section parted. There wasn't anything the Bull Moose couldn't do quicker and easier than any two men.

But that didn't satisfy Shooter Haggerty. The thing had got to eatin' on him and all he could think about was there was a guy that didn't like Texas and it was up to him to do something about it. First he tried talkin' to him. Shooter got hisself a bunch of books and read up on Texas until it ran out his ears.

He knew how many oil wells there was, how many cows, how many people, and how long it would take to get from Midland to El Paso on a Greyhound bus. He knew about the ocean, the mountains, the prairies, and every soldier or cowboy that ever toted a gun. Shooter was ready.

He made for the Red Dog one day when the Bull Moose was off tower. That was a pretty safe bet, because when he wasn't on tower, the Bull Moose was usually in gettin' hisself a schooner of red-eye, and this day wasn't any different from the others.

The minute Bull Moose edged in the door, the place started to quiet down. The boys stopped their loud gab and started to mumble about nothing. There was something about Bull Moose that made a guy careful of what he said. The boys along the bar moved over and gave him a lot of room, and when he stomped up to the bar, scowling, his mug of whiskey was already in front of him.

He was on his second mug when Shooter came up and stood beside him.

"Evenin'," Shooter said real pleasant.

Bull Moose frowned and grunted like a prodded pig.

Shooter scuffed around for a minute, and had one or two shots like he was gettin' it all lined up what he was goin' to say. Then he turned to Bull Moose and said it like it was a piece of news fit to put in a headline.

"You probably won't believe this," Shooter said. "But did you know Texas has got 265,896 square miles and grows more onions than any damn state in the Union?"

Bull Moose wasn't impressed. He looked like he might start a housecleaning if the gab kept up.

But Shooter wasn't to be stopped now. "We got 20,000 miles of highway and 15,000 miles of railroad," Shooter recited. "We got more damn beefsteak than we know what to do with."

You can't say Bull Moose didn't do his part to keep peace. He shoved a couple of roughnecks out of the way and moved down to the other end of the bar. But Shooter followed right along.

"We got oil, gas, sugar-cane, and coal mines," Shooter went on. "And where do you think the F.B.I. would be if they didn't have the Rangers to help 'em out?"

Bull Moose downed his red-eye, slammed the schooner on the bar, and whirled around. One-two-three, just like that. Shooter didn't even slow down.

"We got mountains, ocean, plains, and the best damn soldiers in the world. Look at the Alamo."

Me and the rest of the boys nodded our heads. The Bull Moose glared at us, then he glared at Shooter. "That!" he snorted. "A run-down-at-the-heel revolution. They got better ones in South America every week."

Suddenly, it was so quiet you could hear a gnat tip-toe across a rubber mat. The air froze solid. The whole inside of the saloon was a big cake of ice, and the people were frozen in it. For a minute, or maybe an hour, nobody moved or made a sound. It was just a matter of time before the place exploded, and the Bull Moose knew it as well as anybody. His eyes began to squint so slow you could hardly see them, his face hadn't moved at all but it seemed like he was grinning. That was the first time I ever saw Bull Moose grin.

The glass Shooter held in his hand dropped to the floor and crashed like a bomb going off. He wasn't interested in converting Bull Moose now. He wasn't interested in anything but slamming him. Suddenly, the ice that froze them shattered. Shooter's big fist shot out like a comet from nowhere, and smashed Bull Moose's face.

BULL MOOSE staggered back, his mouth dropped open in surprise. I guess the Bull Moose wasn't used to having people jump in the middle of him like

that. He staggered back, caught himself on the bar, and grinned wide. When Shooter came on, he was ready.

Shooter came roarin' in like a spring cyclone and smashed another right on the side of Bull Moose's head. Bull Moose's head snapped to one side but the grin never left his face. He pulled back a big, knotted club of a fist, and slammed it in.

He caught Shooter on the side of the head, and that's where the Bull Moose got surprised again. From the way he looked, you knowed he figured the fight was over. He looked for Shooter to lay down and play dead like them guys in Borneo or some of them places.

Shooter spun around and grabbed a table to hold him up. He shook his head once, but he didn't fall. He came storming back in, and before the Bull Moose could get it straight what was goin' on, he found out he was busted in the nose and blood was runnin' down the front of his shirt. The Bull Moose began to take a interest in what was goin' on. He didn't just stand there now, he got his feet going and started moving around. He waded in and slammed Shooter right in the middle. He got one of Shooter's fists in his eye and you could fairly see the mouse jump up.

But the Bull Moose had Shooter right where he wanted him. He had him against the bar and he pulled back that big left and let it go, *smash!* His big shoulders shifted as smooth as a machine working in oil, and that big right came in right behind it. It crashed the side of Shooter's jaw and Shooter dropped. He let the bar slide up his back and seemed to fall in all directions.

The Bull Moose stood wide-legged with his arms hanging at his sides. Shooter hit the floor and started to squirm around and shake his head, like he didn't know what direction to take to get up. He tried them all. Most of them didn't work, and he took a beating banging his head on a table leg. But he finally made it.

He got his elbows under him, then his knees. He figured out which way was up, then he started pulling hisself in that direction. The Bull Moose watched with his mouth open and his eyes popping. He watched Shooter pull hisself up the leg of the table, then grab the top of the bar and pull until he was standing up again.

He was weaving, and his eyes looked like the glass eyes you see in mounted buffalo heads—but he was standing. He fixed his glass eyes on Bull Moose, doubled his fists and started marching in.

The Bull Moose could of killed him. He could of pulled back that big right-hand club and tore his head off. What he done was stand there with his mouth open, and when Shooter was almost on him, he stuck out his hand and kind of pushed. Shooter went down again and this time he didn't get up.

For a minute, I almost liked the big ape. He stood there looking down at Shooter like he'd never seen nothin' like him. Finally he got hisself together, made an ugly snarl at everybody, then he whirled and stomped out of the place. It didn't take long for me to get over almost liking him.

For the rest of the day the air was pulled tight and people moved around like cats with sore feet. The next day wasn't any better.

The boys on the rig couldn't of shied away from the Bull Moose any more if he'd been wearing small-pox signs. Bull Moose seemed to like it that way. We had the hole sunk and the drill-stem out. There wasn't nothing to do until the nitro came to shoot the well, so the drilling crew loafed over on the lazy bench, and the Bull Moose leaned against the draw-works, sayin' nothing.

About noon we seen the little red truck come inching off the highway, comin' across the flat pasture-land heading for the well. The truck was rolling on the flat, off to the side of the rutted road. It was comin' slow, but still it was a hell of a lot faster than nitro trucks usually travel, and we knew right off it was Shooter Haggerty.

It started out to be one of the quietest shootin' jobs that was ever pulled. Nobody said a thing.

The air on the derrick floor seemed thin and cold. Maybe it was the nitro Shooter was bringing in from the truck. I always get jumpy when there's soup around, and I was hoping for Pete's sake they didn't start another fight with cans of nitro scattered all over the deck.

But from the looks Shooter was handing out, it would be hard to get insurance on it. Shooter didn't look so good. The bridge of his nose was thick and one eye

looked like it was squintin' out of dark cave. There seemed to be more of his face on the left side than on the right.

But the Bull Moose wasn't lookin' so good either. His lips were thick, and he was careful about the way he moved his mouth. One eye had a ring around it the color of heavy crude. He motioned the drilling crew to one side, and we stood around nervously, watching Shooter juggle that nitro.

When he got it all on the derrick floor, the Bull Moose got a long, open-mouth torpedo and eased it into the mouth of the well. After they'd latched the bail, Shooter started opening cans and pouring the thin, yellow stuff down the metal side—not saying a word. I breathed a little easier and my stomach quit trying to swap places with my adam's apple. It looked like Shooter was goin' to get the job over before he did anything about the other business.

THE only thing that was keeping them apart was that twenty quarts of nitro. The Bull Moose held the torpedo while Shooter sloshed water on its ouside. They still didn't say anything, but you could see the sparks fly when they happened to look at each other.

When they got the torpedo washed they hooked on the power from the draw-works. Shooter's truck wasn't fixed for power like some are, and he had to depend on Bull Moose to get the soup in the hole. They eased the shell into the mouth of the well and began to let her down. Shooter was standing over the hole motioning, a little more, a little more. One thing about Bull Moose—he wasn't nothin' if he wasn't a oilman. Even Shooter nodded his head once or twice when he seen how smooth he was handling the draw-works—but the look on Shooter's face let you know that it wasn't goin' to change things.

The bottom of the hole could of been full of eggs, and the way the Bull Moose set that shot down he wouldn't of broke a one. They pulled the line up and got set for another shell. They still didn't say nothin'. Nobody did. They poured the rest of the nitro into another torpedo and started easing her down again like the other one.

The line reeled out, one hundred, two hundred feet, down to a thousand. That's when we first felt it. At first it wasn't enough to hardly notice, but the Bull Moose noticed it and he stopped the draw-works and looked up quick. We all stood froze, staring at nothing, listening hard.

Then we felt it again. There wasn't any mistake about it this time, the ground began to quiver and some loose boards on the derrick floor began to rattle. I couldn't of stood there for more'n a few seconds, but it seemed like a lifetime. I stood there on the derrick floor for about forty years and I could feel my hair turning gray from old age, and I couldn't move.

The little quivering had turned to a rumble. Somebody groaned, "My God! The well's heading!" I don't know who it was, it might of been me. Whoever it was, I'm glad they said it, because it snapped me out of it. By then, I was an old man but I could still move, and I knew as well as the next one what a heading well could do with forty quarts of nitroglycerine in the hole. Gasses locked up in the belly of the earth, breaking loose and rushing up through the hole. Pushing those two torpedoes up with it.

By that time you could hear the gasses rushing and I started to run. I didn't stop to think or look where I was goin' or anything else. I just ran. Just to get as far away from that derrick as I could before the gas popped those torpedoes out of the hole and slammed them against the traveling-block, or toppled them on the floor. I knew what the stuff would do. I'd seen it work. It would blast that steel derrick right off the face of the earth.

I ran as fast as I could, clipping heads off of blue-bonnets as I skimmed across the pasture. There was a little draw about seventy-five or a hundred yards from the derrick and I made for that. I hit flat on my belly and scooted. I figured it was time for those shells to pop out, and I didn't want to be caught in the open.

The rumble was louder now, it was all you could hear. I couldn't hold my curiosity back any longer, I had to see what was going on. I stretched my head over the draw to see if everybody got away all right. The drilling crew made it, they were further down the draw and they had their noggins stuck up too. But I didn't see Shooter, or the Bull Moose.

I looked back at the derrick. I blinked and couldn't believe it. But I looked again and there they were. Shooter and the Bull Moose standing wide-legged with the mouth of the well between them, glaring at each other, daring each other to turn and run. Maybe they was crazy. I don't know. Most people would say they was, and I wouldn't be one to argue. There wasn't nothin' they could do to stop the well from heading, and they couldn't keep that soup from coming out. If they closed the valve they'd blow hell out of everything, and if they left it open it would be just as bad. I guess oilmen—anyway, Texans and guys like Bull Moose—are crazy. Anyway, they didn't run.

They stood there glaring at each other like two wrestlers coming together. Then hell broke loose. You could hear the hiss and rush of the gas, and all of a sudden the mouth of the first torpedo came out of the hole bright and shining. It went *pop* as it left the hole, and a fine spray of oil rushed out behind it. My eyes were glued to that torpedo. If somebody had stuck a knife in my back, I still couldn't have pulled my eyes away.

It seemed to sit right there in the air, and this fine spray of oil was covering it and making it black and slick. Then it began to topple and I saw two big hands reach out like slow-motion and take the thing. It all happened in a flash, but the way it seemed to me, the Bull Moose had all the time in the world. He took that long, slick torpedo in his hands and pulled it against his chest, handling it as carefully as a new-born baby, then he pivoted, one-two, and racked it. He turned back for the other one. . . He was too late.

The second torpedo shot out of the hole, and behind it came a roaring gush of oil. The Bull Moose couldn't make it. Even in that crazy, slow-motion way I was seeing things, I could see he would never make it. The torpedo had shot into the air, covered thick and black with oil and mud. It dangled just below the traveling-block. It began to topple before the Bull Moose got turned around.

I shut my eyes and mashed my face in the short grass of the draw and waited for the explosion. The pulse in my throat and temples was pounding and my chest felt like there was a slow, smouldering fire eating at it.

I DON'T know how long I waited, but I lay there with my face stuck in the ground until suddenly the roaring of the well died away. It took me a while to get it straight what happened—then I didn't believe it. The heading of the well was over and still there was no explosion.

I decided if things hadn't blown up already, they wasn't goin' to. I began to crawl to my knees and look around. The rest of the drilling crew did the same. We got to our feet and started walking toward the well, our mouths hangin' open, lookin' like a bunch of sleep-walkers.

The derrick was covered with oil and slush blown out of the hole. The stuff dripped in a thick rain on the derrick floor, and Shooter and Bull Moose were covered with it. Bull Moose was standing stiff beside the hole, panting. What I could see of his face through the coating of oil was white, and I knew then that Bull Moose was human like everybody else, because he was scared. Shooter was hunched over, his back to the hole. He began to straighten up slowly and I could see the second torpedo was still in his arms. It was slick and black with oil. A chill raked down my back like a cold knife-blade when I though of trying to hold onto twenty quarts of nitroglycerine in that oil-coated shell.

Shooter lifted the torpedo gently and racked it. He and Bull Moose just stood looking at each other, kind of panting.

I came up on the derrick floor with the rest of the drilling crew. I was still shaky and I guess the rest of the boys were too. We stood on one foot, then the other, with oil dripping down our backs, and nobody could think of a thing to say. Finally the derrick-man took out a big handkerchief and began to mop some of the dripping slush off his arms. "This damn oil," he croaked.

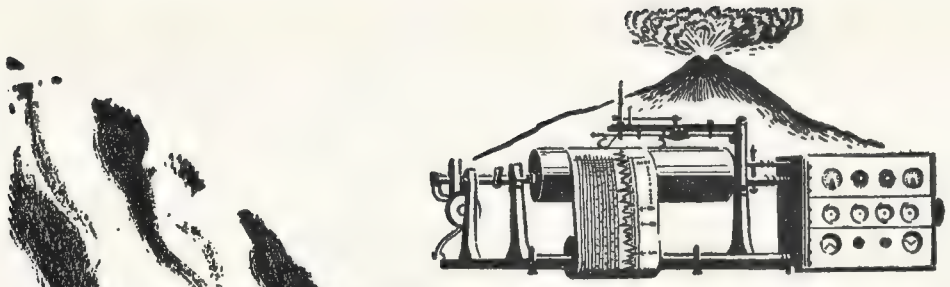
The Bull Moose spun around and glared. His big hand shot out, grabbed the derrick-man's collar and lifted him right off the floor.

"That's Texas oil!" the Bull Moose growled. "There ain't no better oil nowhere! See?"

The derrick-man was squirming and gurgling. Shooter was grinning. Even through that mess of oil and slush on his face, I could tell he was grinning.

ILLUSTRATED BY
PAT DENMAN

He hurled the squealing animal high up on the smoking crest of the lava.



A PIG FOR MAUNA LOA

FATHER XAVIER JOHAN paused momentarily in his long strides to turn his troubled eyes up the slopes of the black mountain that stood in a startling, sharp silhouette against the dark blue Hawaiian sky. As though portending the evil forces at work within the heart of the mountain, there were none of the usual soft, billowing clouds drifting across the lava-scarred slopes, and the flows of the past century stood out like bold brush strokes of the devil's own black paint brush. Here and there stood huge cinder cones, those bleak and lifeless heaps of volcanic ash that once had vomited molten lava from their fiery pits. The seething lava had flowed down the slopes like some relentless monster that crushed and seared, enveloped that which it could not destroy, until it slid into the sea with the unleashed furies of a thousand hells. Ap-

By CARL J. KUNZ

palled by his own thoughts, the priest picked up the skirts of his frayed cassock and directed his determined steps toward the stall of David Lohio, the Hawaiian cobbler.

The bamboo stall, roofed with woven pandanus leaves, seemed to lean wearily under its gaudy fringe of red and blue gourds, paper leis, and bunches of red ohelo berries. The huge cobbler sat hunched over his shoe last, his heavy-lidded eyes unmoving as he drove nail after nail into the sole of a riding boot. Father Johan thought of a bronzed toad sitting in the shadow of a wayside shrine. A ponderous toad, but not a loathsome one.

As in the past, the priest suddenly felt dwarfed by the presence of the Hawaiian. He became aware of his light skin that refused to tan, the frayed cassock, the cheap cardboard sun helmet, and the manner in which the cobbler's thick lips were now lifting in an amused quirk. He removed the sun helmet and hid it behind him.

"Good afternoon, David."

The Hawaiian inspected the sole of the boot with a critical eye for his own work, then looked up. " So the *kahuna* is afraid of Pele!" he rumbled with a faint hint of amused sarcasm. "Would you like to buy a young pig to sacrifice to her? I will sell it to you very cheap."

Father Johan remembered his brief pause on the road. *This man is no fool,* he warned himself. *He is both intelligent and formidable—not an easy match for the mere priest I am.* Aloud, he said, "David, I've come to talk about your fiery goddess, Pele—about red handkerchiefs, those ohelo berries, and all this other nonsense."

David Lohio sat erect on his stool and allowed his smoldering eyes to drift down to the frayed skirts of the priest's cassock and then up to the sun-burnt nose that had begun to peel. "Pele has been the goddess of the Hawaiian people for more years than a man can remember," he snorted. "Why should you, a newcomer, call it nonsense? If you don't believe it, then go away from here like the other *kahuna* did."

"Of course I don't believe it, and I certainly won't leave here. Believe what you will, David, but—well, this story that you've been telling the people about the village being doomed by Pele—I can't allow you to tell such lies to these good people."

"Lies!" The Hawaiian's huge hands clenched into massive fists, and the cords in his neck stood out in taut ridges. *"Kahuna,* the village is *pau*—finished. You understand! Didn't Pele, as an old woman, go to Sam Kaakuhiwi's house and ask for something to eat, only to have Sam kick her down the stairs? And didn't the Japanese, Takamura, set his dog upon her when she came to his door?" He jerked the riding boot off the last and threw it into one corner of the stall. "Lies! When that church of yours is buried under a mountain of lava, will you believe it then? Answer me, *kahuna!"*

Father Johan throttled the sudden surge of anger that threatened to seize him. He shook his head. "Not even then!" he almost shouted. "David, please try to see my side of it. All of the men have left their jobs, and many of them have very little money. I'm not going to stand by while they starve their families in order to pay your prices for all this—this junk. Who's going to feed them—you and Pele?"

David Lohio shrugged. "Maybe it is better to buy a pig and sacrifice it to Pele. If the men cut cane for the plantation, and Pele burns their homes, who will build them new houses—you, *kahuna?"* His lips lifted in a taunting smirk. "I have a very young pig for sale—I might even *give* him to you if you will sacrifice him to Pele."

The priest stared in shocked unbelief. "Enough of that! I warn you, David Lohio, that I shall do all that I can to make these people see that your Pele is a fake, that you are robbing them of their money!"

The Hawaiian burst from the stall and stood towering over Father Johan, his big body shaking with rage. "Watch your tongue, *kahuna!"* he roared. Suddenly, the fury left his face, and he lifted his eyes to the summit of Mauna Loa, the mountain. Triumphantly, he said, "Even now, Pele is about to give you her answer. Watch!"

The priest stared in amazement at the man who stood before him, a heroic bronze figure in a red shirt that was open to the waist and a pair of faded blue trousers that were rolled above the knees to reveal legs that were as staunch as young

oaks. His gray hair lay in tight curls across the full sweep of his head. As though he were conscious of Father Johan's scrutiny, David Lohio threw back his head and thrust up his arms in a beseeching gesture.

"Pele, *auhea oe?* Where are you, Pele?" he called.

AS THE Hawaiian shouted his plea, Father Johan heard the muted roar as the earth protested and lurched beneath his feet. Then, with the crescendo howl of a train plunging into a tunnel, the earth whipped and billowed, and dust spurted high into the air where it was caught by a wind that appeared from nowhere. Coconuts rattled upon the corrugated sheet iron roofs of the village, while ripe papayas dropped from the trees and bounced into the road. The priest fought to keep his balance, and lost. Swallowing his panic, he waited on hands and knees. When the roar died to a murmur and finally disappeared, he arose and brushed the dust from his cassock.

David Lohio, also on his hands and knees, stood erect and rubbed a bruised knee. "I must sacrifice two pigs now," he said ruefully. "I think maybe Pele did not like to be awakened so soon. But she has answered you, *kahuna!* Now you should believe."

Too bewildered to protest, the priest turned and headed for his church. He had gone a few yards when he remembered the sun helmet. It lay in the middle of the road where a half-starved mongrel sniffed at it. When Father Johan picked up the helmet, the dog scurried down the road with its tail tucked between its legs, yelping a halfhearted protest. *If only the poor animal knew how fortunate he is,* he thought, *to have a tail to tuck behind his legs and run away.*

The church was a low, stuccoed building whose only apparent claim to sanctity was its stubby bell cupola and the gilded cross. It was set back from the road, almost hidden by the spreading banyan tree whose root-like appendages formed a natural arbor for the path leading to its doors. Two young pigs rooted at the edge of the path, and Father Johan found himself skirting them as though they were the very sons of Belial. He began to chuckle, but the laugh died in his throat when he saw the gaping hole in the side of his church.

The cement-stucco lay on the ground, ugly patches of it which bore the imprint of the chicken wire and the warped studdings. There had never been an inner wall, and he could look directly in upon the worn and splintered pews. A gray lizard darted quickly to the edge of the hole, swiveled its head from side to side, then disappeared inside.

With the look of a wounded deer in his eyes, Father Johan slowly circled the church, looking for other damage. Then he entered and found one of the stations, those fourteen groups of sad-eyed statues which he had so carefully painted with gilt and water colors on his arrival the year before, lying on the floor in shards. Reverently, he piled the debris into the apron formed by the skirts of his cassock and carried them behind the curtained sacristy beside the little altar.

The parsonage, like the church, had been a plantation-inspired project, thus its startling starkness and the resemblance to many of the houses in the village. It had the same corrugated sheet iron roof and the rickety *lanai,* or porch, but there the resemblance ceased. The white paling fence was intact, and the lawn green and lush.

Father Johan allowed the screen door to bang behind him. The noise usually awakened Martha Loo, his housekeeper, and gave her time to vacate his leather easy chair. He listened for the sound of the floor creaking under her ponderous weight, but all was quiet.

"Martha!" he called. He tried again, then began looking for her.

The empty kitchen explained her absence. All indications of her exalted position as housekeeper were gone, including the sewing basket and the pile of movie magazines.

He was looking for a note when he heard the timid knock.

It was a boy, one of Martha's many bare-footed progeny. "My mother—she say *pau hana*—no more work by you. Want money now," the boy piped, thrusting out a brown hand. "Gimme."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Boki. Will you come in for a minute?"

Boki's black eyes rolled with fear. "No, no! David Lohio say Pele ketch Boki if

Boki go in *kahuna's* house," he quavered. "He tell my mother same thing."

"I see. Well, wait here then. I'll be just a minute."

He took the money out of the allotted household expensese and made the entry in a little book he kept for that purpose. When he returned to the door, the boy was poised for flight.

"What will your mother do, Boki, now that she will not work for me?"

"Pick ohelo berries for David Lohio, of course!" he announced scornfully. "Maybe get rich!"

When the boy was gone, he went to his desk and began a letter to his bishop. It was no plea to be relieved of his duties, but a confession of defeat. Those ohelo berries, for instance—months ago, at the height of the berry season, the children ate them or threw away those which they couldn't eat. Now, even the plantation Portuguese were clamoring for them, steeped as the people were in the religion of their forefathers.

Pele, he wrote, was no devil to be exorcised. She was a part of the heritage of an unbending race, the personification of their own courage. Then he told of the earthquake. He sealed the letter and leaned the envelope against Father Chaffee's picture. For a brief moment, he thought that the picture of the elderly priest frowned at him.

Father Chaffee had built the parish of Ena. After twenty years, although comparatively young in age, he had been a tired old man. When he turned over the parish to Father Johan, he had merely said, "Son, they will try to best you every foot of the way. My only advice is to learn to be a man before you are priest. I have nothing else to give you but my blessings."

I think I know now what he meant, Father Johan told himself. Then he removed his cassock and donned a coat and his Panama hat. He remembered to tack a note to his door, reading, "Gone to the Kilauea Volcano Observatory—back about 9:00."

NEIL HOLLIS, the volcanologist, was examining a pile of seismograph charts when the priest entered his office and took a chair. There was a large plaster model of the volcano on a nearby table, while cross sectional diagrams of the same volcano decorated the walls. Here, Father Johan knew, the pulse of the mountain was taken every minute of the day throughout the years.

"I'm just trying to guess what Pele has on her mind, Father," the slight, graying scientist remarked. "The eruption is only a matter of hours now."

Father Johan stuffed his pipe and put a match to it, hoping that Hollis wouldn't notice that his hands were trembling. "Where will the eruption be this time, Neil?"

A chuckle gurgled in the scientist's throat. "That sounds like Father Chaffee! Sometimes I used to wonder if he didn't worship the old girl as much as the Hawaiians do," he answered. "It'll be a summit eruption this time. Don't tell me that you're having trouble with that Lohio *kanaka,* too."

"It doesn't appear to be something new, I take it."

"No, it isn't, Father," Hollis said. "The old gentlemen whom you relieved fought the same battle, but he finally admitted that he was whipped. You probably don't know it, but he asked to be relieved of his duties in Ena."

The priest stared thoughtfully at the model of the volcano. "No. I didn't know that," he replied slowly. "By the way, if there is to be a summit eruption, where will the flow head for?"

"South Point, if it's a large flow. That's pretty far away from Ena. Now, how about some coffee?"

Father Johan smiled for the first time. "No thanks, Neil. But there is something that I'd like to have, but you'll have to consider it as a contribution to Ena: cement—could you spare a poor man a bag?"

"Make it two! I'll put them in that wreck you call a car."

"Neil, I'll remember you in my prayers!"

The scientist grinned. "You better pray to Pele that she doesn't decide to change her mind and start a second eruption somewhere down along the slopes. I haven't had a chance to check all the graphs that were made since that tremor we had today. Well, let's go out and get that cement."

A cold hand clenched at Father Johan's chest as he followed the scientist. *I'll*

pray, he told himself, *but it won't be to Pele.*

When the cement was stored on the seat beside him, he began picturing the consternation on David Lohio's face when the Hawaiian found him repairing his church. The thought made him glow, and he thrust out his hand to Hollis. "Thanks, Neil! This is going to be one time when I'm going to fight fire with science."

"Wish I could say the same, Father. Even this full moon is in the fiery witch's favor—the Hawaiians call it 'Pele's Moon.'" He closed the car door. "Well, take it easy. I'll drop you word if the picture changes."

The road back to Ena led through shadowy lanes bordered with giant fern trees, then passed the fields of sugar where the moon made a silvery coverlet of the tasseled cane, and finally rode the crest of an old lava flow upon which the village had been built. Father Johan drove slowly along, busy with his plans to repair his church. Even Mauna Loa, the mountain, seemed to be in a happy mood, for the summit was crowned with fleecy clouds.

He had just passed the last of the sugar cane when his headlights suddenly picked up the handful of moving forms in the middle of the road. The group fled, seeking cover behind the huge chunks of rotting lava beside the road. One man stumbled, and something white leaped from his arms and fled into the path of the car. Father Johan jammed the brake pedal to the floor, but not soon enough. A front wheel struck, and the night air was suddenly rent by the squeal of a pig.

He leaped from the car, pity welling within him for the stricken animal. It wasn't much older than a suckling pig, and was trying to escape on three legs. He caught it and carried it into the light. There was little that could be done for the injured leg.

"Who owns this pig?" he called. "Come out from where you are hiding."

A man stepped from behind the nearest chunk of lava. "It is mine, *kahuna,*" he said nervously. "We think maybe you are the police."

"Oh, it's you, Sam." Sam Kaakuhiwi, a Hawaiian-Chinese, was the village handyman when he felt like working, but the problem of feeding his family fell upon the villagers. Father Johan handed him the injured animal. "What are you going to do with it?"

Sam fingered the red ribbon around the pig's neck. "A—a friend give him to me," he stammered. "I take him home—make *kalua puaa.*"

Father Johan pursed his lips thoughtfully. The pig was destined for sacrifice to the fiery goddess, but he quickly forgave Sam for the lie." "Could that friend be David Lohio?" he asked.

"Sure, sure! I pick plenty ohelo berries, so Lohio give me the pig. Fine thing, no?"

"That's fine, Sam, but you're going to have to kill the poor thing now," the priest told him. "Do you have a knife?"

The man looked about frantically, then nodded. He pulled out a knife and carried the pig to the side of the road. Father Johan smiled broadly and glanced up at Mauna Loa in a silent challenge.

Sam returned with the carcass and deposited it between a fender and the engine hood. Then he perched on the running board. "Everybody eat now," he said with a shaky laugh.

"Everybody but Pele, eh, Sam? Maria and children will enjoy that pig, I'm sure."

He dropped Sam at his door, then drove to the parsonage. He had just parked the car when he heard the sound of continuous thundering in the distance. Then, all about him, he heard the sleepy chirping of mynah birds, and a rooster crowed his challenge. A child fretted nearby, and the night air carried the crooning voice of the mother as she quieted it. Just as he was about to close the parsonage door behind him and shut out the lonely sounds, he looked once more at the mountain. At first, he though that it might be the moon that gave the clouds their reddish glow. He watched for a minute as the glow grew brighter, then closed the door. *Now, we'll see,* he told himself.

Throughout the night, he was conscious of the earth shaking and the distant rumbling. Just before dawn, he awakened and pulled down the shades to shut out the reddish glow that had startled him into wakefulness. Then, after lying awake for half an hour, he crept out to the *lanai* and assured himself that it was the summit eruption that Neil Hollis had promised him. It was long after daylight when he awakened the second time.

IN THE sunlight, the summit was entirely hidden by a mass of black clouds that boiled and tumbled like a witch's brew. Lightning lashed out, but the thunder was lost in the greater roar of the mountain. Father Johan knocked together a mixing box for his cement and loaded his car without a second glance at the eruption.

David Lohio stood in front of the stall as he drove by. The Hawaiian was like a graven image with brown legs spread wide and his arms folded while he stared stolidly at the eruption. Father Johan thought of a wooden Indian in front of a cigar store, then chided himself. He waved, but the Hawaiian merely stared through him.

Once at the church, he forgot the Hawaiian's rebuff. He applied the cement with considerable care, until only a large splotch of damp stucco outlined the spot where the hole had been. Then he inspected and tapped for loose stucco, applying daubs of cement where he found cracks. He was loading the mixing box and the tools into his car when he saw David Lohio and Sam Kaakuhiwi approaching.

"Good morning, gentlemen," he greeted. "How was that pig, Sam?"

They halted in front of him. David stared coldly at him while Sam cringed.

"*Kahuna,* please tell Lohio that you made me kill that pig," Sam pleaded.

Father Johan met David's stare. "Of course I did, David," he admitted. "After all, Sam's wife and children are more important than your Pele."

The big Hawaiian gave him a pitying look. "Once, *kahuna,* a man killed and ate a pig that was given to him to sacrifice to Pele. That man lived in Hoopuloa. And where is Hoopuloa now? Like this village will be—*pau*!" He flung out an arm, pointing up to the mountain. "Look!"

The priest turned. The mass of black clouds was now slowly rising from the summit, leaving only a sulphurous haze that marked the cooling lava.

"It's over!" he exclaimed with heartfelt relief.

David gave him a tolerant smile that he might have given to a flight-fancy child. "Pele has not gone back to sleep," he spat contemptuously. "She is looking for another way to come out of the mountain. *Then* watch!"

Neil Hollis' words came to him. *You'd better pray to Pele that she doesn't decide to change her mind and start a second eruption somewhere down along the slopes!* Aloud, he said, soberly, "I shall watch then, but I know that you're wrong."

"More better that you get ready to run away," the Hawaiian retorted. He studied the priest for a few seconds from beneath his lowered eyelids, then turned and stalked away with the dignity of his kind. Sam Kaakuhiwi trotted anxiously after him.

The second eruption began with a shower of mud and boulders shot high into the air in an explosion that shook the village. Smoke and steam spouted in a geyser that reached hundreds of feet above the slope. As Father Johan watched, a cloud of burning gas suddenly enveloped the area, leaving a huge fountain of spraying lava in its wake.

The eruption hadn't come as too much of a surprise, despite David Lohio's prophecy. Neil Hollis had kept his promise, for his note was under the parsonage door when Father Johan returned from repairing his church. The volcanologist had timed the eruption to the minute, and his estimate of ten miles above Ena hadn't been very far off. He had gone so far as to predict that the eruption would be a severe one, and that the village lay in the direct path of the flow.

The priest collected his personal belongings and began loading the car. Then, avoiding the road that passed the Hawaiian's stall, he drove to the church and finished his packing. He parked the car behind the church and walked down the dusty road to David Lohio's place of business.

The crowd of villagers around the stall parted to let him through. Some stared defiantly at him, while others turned their heads. He recognized many members of his parish, but he pretended not to see them.

The big Hawaiian greeted him with a scornful grunt.

"Do you mind if I say a few words to these people, David?" he asked. "It won't take long."

"Pele speaks loud enough, *kahuna.* If

you think you can talk better than her, go ahead and talk."

"I'll try to," he answered, and turned to the villagers. He seemed to feel the impact of their gaze, and knew that fear ran rampant in their minds. Young mothers held on to their children with one hand as they clutched their hoarded money in the other. One elderly lady counted her change aloud, ignoring him entirely.

"My friends, it is now too late to appease your Pele," he said. "Pack your belongings and head for the plantation house. If you have furniture that you wish to save, we'll see if Mr. Frazier, the manager, will send us trucks. You will be safe there at the plantation until you can return here to your homes or find a new one. This money which you would spend will serve you better later."

"But who will stop Pele from burning our homes?" a woman asked. "Look at the pigs we have already sacrificed!"

Father Johan nodded sympathetically. "You are right, Martha Kawelo, but I have already thought of that. Answer me this one question! Who among you knows Pele best?"

There was a chorus of "Lohio!"

"Wouldn't it then be only proper that David Lohio should intercede for you—ask Pele not to destroy your homes? I am sure that if Pele should refuse to hear David, then she surely would not listen to you. Go now and get ready."

The old lady with the loose change left the crowd and approached him. She thrust out a bony finger at David Lohio, and cackled, "How will we know that this big water buffalo will not run away?"

"I will stay here and watch him do it, Mama Kekahi."

Father Johan watched them disperse, and waited until the last one had gone. Then he turned to the big Hawaiian. "They are expecting big things of you. I hope you won't disappoint them," he remarked.

The man's bronze features faded slightly, and then blackened. His thick lips tightened. "*Kahuna,* you forget that I am a Hawaiian. No, I will not run away as you are hoping that I will," he said stiffly, and walked out of the stall.

The priest watched him enter the grove of papaia trees that hid the man's house from the road. Suddenly, Father Johan was filled with a glow of admiration. "I'm afraid you've won again, David Lohio," he murmured. "I wonder how you knew that I was expecting you to run away."

DURING the remaining hours of daylight, the priest assisted the fleeing villagers as they frantically loaded their possessions into the plantation trucks. When he had assured himself that only he and David remained, he drove his car to the plantation house and left it. It was almost dark when he arrived at the village on foot.

He found the big Hawaiian standing with folded arms in front of the gayly decorated stall. "When the time comes, David, I'll be at my house. Will you call me, please?"

The man gave him an impersonal glance and a brief nod. "If the *kahuna* will not have run away."

Father Johan's shoulder slumped with a sudden weariness. "I guess I deserved that from you. No, I won't run away."

Once more at the parsonage, he showered thoroughly and went into the kitchen. On the table he found a portion of a chicken, some yams, and a bowl of *poi.* Choked with gratitude, he ate, knowing that only David Lohio could have left the warm food. Then, setting his alarm clock for midnight, he removed his shoes and lay down to sleep.

The alarm awakened him to a night that was almost as bright as day. When he had shaved, he stepped out into the road where he could see the full sweep of the slope.

As he watched the fountain of fire shooting from the maw of a newly formed crater, he became aware of what appeared to be many small fires dotting the slope. One small fire suddenly blossomed out into a ball of flame, and then became a stream of lava. It was then he recognized those small fires as burning gases escaping from the darkened face of the flow. He tried to estimate the distance—it seemed to be barely halfway between the village and the crater.

A dog barked at him from the shadows as he walked down the road to David Lohio's house. It startled him badly, but he was prepared for the cat that suddenly darted at him and rubbed against his leg.

He found the big Hawaiian asleep in a chair leaning against the outside of the house. Just as he turned to retrace his steps, the man spoke to him.

"Afraid, *kahuna*?"

"I thought that I might find you awake," he answered calmly. "How far up is that flow?"

"Maybe five, six miles," David grunted. "More better go back to sleep. I call you."

"You'll find me at the church whenever you're ready."

He blocked the church doors wide open as he entered, and the reflected light seemed to soften the sharp shadows. The Hawaiian found him in the front pew, fast asleep with his forehead leaning against his folded arms. Father Johan had to look to the east to assure himself that it was dawn.

"Come. More better we try to stop Pele now."

"I didn't think that lava traveled that fast. Would you mind waiting outside for me, please? I'll be just a minute."

In the early morning light, he trudged up the slope beside David and wondered vaguely if Father Chaffèe would have approved of his methods. At least, he wouldn't have approved of his successor leading two of the sacrificial pigs to the sacrifice. The big Hawaiian called a halt when they had gone about half a mile.

Father Johan gazed up the shallow valley in which the village lay. The huge, winding gray ridge that was the main lava flow, was just now entering the head of the valley. The front of it bulged and spread out over the valley floor. Flaming gases shot up from different points along the ridge, reminding him of a dragon that exhaled flames from vents along its back. He began to hear the continuous grinding noise of the flow.

"Isn't it moving faster now? It seems to be," he said.

David Lohio grunted. "Come much faster now. Look, *kahuna*—you see what looks like old cinder cone ahead of us?"

He had noticed it, wondering if the flow would split at that point as it came toward them. "I see it, David. Why?"

"That is mouth of old lava tube—like tunnel. Soon, I go ask Pele to stop. If she don't stop, lava will come around both sides—give you plenty of time to run. In tube, you keep to the left, soon come out over there." He pointed to the high rise on his left. "Pele will not catch you up there."

Father Johan studied the man's face carefully. "And what will you be doing while I'm running up that tube?" he demanded. "David Lohio, don't think that I will—"

"You talk too much!" the Hawaiian snapped. "I go now."

HE HANDED the leash of one of the two pigs to the priest, and cradled the other under his arm. He strode quickly up past the old tube until the wall of smoking lava towered high above him. Then he unconcernedly slit the animal's throat and tossed it at the base of the flow.

"Soon it will stop," he announced quietly, on his return.

Minutes passed as the smoking wall moved down upon them. Father Johan began to feel its heat beating against his face.

A surge of panic shook him when the Hawaiian gave a blood-curdling yell and raced forward with the three remaining pigs squealing in his arms. The man hurled the animals against the face of the flow. One fell short, and he swept it up and threw it high up on the smoking crest.

He was fighting for breath now, and the priest saw the gray tone beneath the bronze skin that glistened with steaming perspiration. The Hawaiian glared balefully at the quivering gray mass that now touched the hill marking the entrance of the tube.

"Run, *kahuna*, for the tube," he ordered. "When the lava passes it, it will come too fast for us to run to the village. Go!"

The priest forced himself to be calm, and shook his head. "Not unless you come with me, David," he stated. "Ever since yesterday, I've known the truth about you and that brother of yours that works up at the volcano observatory. The two of you have worked your little game for many years—he with his scientific knowledge, and you with your stories about the old gods. Even that earthquake that you called upon Pele to produce for my benefit was a trick—you could feel the first tremor before I did because you were in your

bare feet. Come now, before it is too late!"

The Hawaiian shook off his tugging hand. "You have told my people that David Lohio would stop Pele, so I will do it."

Before the priest could stop him, he took a handful of red ohelo berries from his pocket and advanced upon the gray wall. With the crushing mass looming high above him, the man crouched, offering the berries.

"Pele!" he shouted. "See, I give you your berries. I do not eat them!"

The priest saw the sudden bulge at the top of the flow. A small trickle of searing lava began flowing down the cooler, gray slag. With a horrified shout, he raced up behind the man and tried to drag him back.

"Go back, *kahuna*!" the Hawaiian roared at Father Johan, trying to push him away.

"I'm sorry, David!" Father Johan breathed, and drove his fist into his stomach, then followed it with a blow to the jaw.

He caught the wilting Hawaiian and half-carried him back until he could shift the big man's weight upon his shoulder.

A huge chunk of the cooling lava rolled down the face of the flow and sped past him, missing him by a foot. A torrent of the molten fluid splattered about, marking his retreat with plumes of smoke. Praying for strength, he staggered to the mouth of the tube and plunged into its darkness.

The slow trip through the tube was terrifying as, above him, the flow thundered and ground on its way. He fell repeatedly, but always remembered to keep to the left. The darkness became gray, and then he saw patches of daylight streaming through the shattered roof of the tube.

By shoving and pulling the Hawaiian's inert body up the piled debris below the hole he found that he had but to roll the man upon solid ground.

THE Hawaiian and the priest sat side by side and looked down upon the village. The smoking wall was now almost upon the church. Father Johan found little comfort in the knowledge that, of all the village, the church would be the first to go. "In another minute it will be gone," he murmured. "Ah, there it goes!"

The little stucco building moved forward a few feet and then began crumbling as lava forged against its foundations. Only the bell cupola with its gilded cross remained erect. Then the cupola began rising into the air as the lava built up beneath it. Smoke streamed up from it to enshroud the cross.

The big Hawaiian strained forward, and his lips fell apart. Then he gave a shout. "*Kahuna*, it is stopping!"

"But where—"

There was a dull explosion as the flow suddenly burst its side near the head of the valley. Lava poured out of the break and streamed into a small ravine that ran at an angle away from the valley. In a matter of minutes, the new break was carrying the bulk of the still-molten lava, leaving the smoking, gray mountain of inert lava just inside the outksirts of the village.

Father Johan sat with his head bowed between his drawn-up knees and whispered his thanks. He felt the impatient touch of the Hawaiian and lifted his head. "Yes, David?"

"Look, *ka*—, ah, Father," David Lohio boomed. "My brother and I will build you a new church—a beeg church." He hesitated. "Only maybe I like to make bargain with you."

Father Johan hid his smile as he contemplated the still smoking bell cupola with its smoke-blackened cross. "What's that, you scoundrel?"

The big Hawaiian gave him an exaggerated wink. "Maybe you let me and my brother sell little crosses every time Pele—I mean, every time Mauna Loa makes eruption. Fine idea, no?"

WHEN

ILLUSTRATED BY
MONROE EISENBERG

YOUR NUMBER'S UP

By EARL SUTTERFIELD

CURLEY ROBERTS threw his bedroll onto the upper springs of our double-deck bunk and shoved his battered suit case in the corner at the foot of the bunk.

"When do we go into the tunnel?" he asked.

"Our shift goes in the hole at eight tonight," I said. "You ever done any of this kinda work?"

He shook his head.

Oh hell, I said to myself. *You sure done a swell job o' pickin'.*

Then, "What line you been followin', son?"

"Truck drivin'—Albukirk to Chi."

Imagine how that sounded to an old tunnel-rat like me. Oh well, I'd picked myself a helper. Maybe he wouldn't be *too* dumb. He was a likely looking guy, big, husky, nice smile. The brightest looking one of the lot, the head office had said, and I had to choose one. Those were shifter's orders.

We had four hours and Curley got some sleep like I told him, 'cause twelve hour shifts don't do you no good if you start in tired.

At seven forty-five he watched Big John, the shift boss, and me check the outfit the gang would use inside. Compressor, motor cars, and light-plant checked O.K., and we had enough hand tools: timber-bars, scaling-bars, chisel-bars, drills, sledges and singlejacks, hose lines, and rotary air-motors, with plenty of two and a half inch wood-bits.

Number Two roared out through the

The tower folded, a short circuit flamed up and the lights went out.

portal and the big hole belched smoke like a volcano in full bloom. The fan at the other end, five miles away, was doing a good job. Big John yelled, "Let's go!" Unmuffled gasoline motors coughed, sputtered, and roared. Wheel flanges squealed as they bit into steel rails. We took the switch pretty fast and ducked through the portal at a twenty mile clip.

A tunnel you run standard gauge trains through isn't exactly a gopher hole, but you couldn't tell after we got inside. The coal smoke was so thick you could taste it. Two minutes of it, and our nostrils and eyes were rimmed with black. From where I sat on a wide framed car, the tunnel wall was only three feet away, but I didn't have any way to prove it. The sixty watt bulbs, strung all over the rig, looked like fireflies and made about as much light.

CURLEY sat alongside me, and I could see his nose wrinkle and his eyes bug out. The first trip in scares most of 'em. I could hear some of the new men gagging and one guy lost his supper. Curley didn't get sick. This pleased me, because some men always do when they have to eat coal smoke.

We didn't stay in the smoke long—only about a mile. Then we busted through into clear sailing, almost as bright as day. Curley sat up and showed some interest. He looked at the soot covered walls whizzing past; walls built wrong side out, the studding on our side, and boards next to the rock.

His brow wrinkled into a puzzled frown. He turned to me and yelled, "I thought they said this tunnel had to be lined. Looks to me like it's lined already."

"Relined," I yelled back. "This timber all has to come out."

Curley went back to staring at the black wall. Fourteen by twenty-four inch Oregon fir posts, bases sat in concrete, reached up twenty feet to a wallplate cap of the same size.

The two lower ends of five arch segments rested on the wallplate, at the spring line. Lagging boards of four by eights lay on top of the segments and completed the arched ceiling.

The whole setup looked solid enough to hold up the Rock of Ages, but I knew better. I'd pushed a bar through a lot of them timbers with just my hands. I wouldn't know, but the chemistry sharks said acids from the rock and gasses from the smoke combined to eat 'em up.

Big John waved his flashlight crosswise and brakes squealed. Not a thing to do now except go to work.

"How far in are we?" asked Curley.

" 'Bout two miles," I said. His eyes got big and round and he stared up at the ceiling. I poured it on a little. "Yeah," I said, "about the same distance down. Two miles either way." His Adam's apple bobbed up and down, but he didn't say anything.

Curley wasn't any whiz but he was willing and he caught on quick, so we got by. I handed him our air-motor and he carried it up the ladder. I strung a hose line from the air tank to the tower car top deck. It only took a minute to stick a bit into the chuck and cinch the setscrew home.

I took the trigger side of the motor, gave him the other handle, and set the bit into the lower arch segment, about a foot from the end. We made the first cut about four-fifths the diameter of the bit. One side of the bit showed for the full length of the hole. Each hole overlapped into the preceding one. Two more cuts we made, and mauled in wedges with a ten pound sledge, so the weight wouldn't bear down and pinch our bit and to keep the segments off our necks.

When we finished the line of holes the timber was cut off clean. No danger of it falling till we knocked the wedges. We moved on to another segment and did the same to it. No, not the next set; we skipped one each time. We didn't dare take out more than half the timber till we'd put in steel rail sets to hold the weight.

Big John tapped me on the shoulder. "Get ready to drop timber. Have to clear for a westbound freight."

We cut the air on our motor and put it away. The ground crew uncoupled the outfit at the end of our tower car, and moved the rest of the string down hill. The tunnel sloped toward the portal. We reached over the end of the deck, knocked out the wedges which held the last segment we'd cut, and the whole arch set crashed down across the track.

The ground men released the brake,

pushed the tower car up hill, yelled, "All clear", and we kicked the next set loose. When the last set had piled up on the rails we swarmed down the ladders, cleared the track, and coupled up again. We gave the ground crew a hand at loading the timber on flats and were ready to shove off.

Each segment made a nice two-man load, so you can see why we didn't want 'em on our necks. You have to respect a weight like that when it falls twenty-five feet. The outfit drifted out by gravity and all was nice and quiet.

Curley said, "I think I'm gonna like this. It's interesting."

"Yeah," I agreed. "It kinda gets in your blood. There's plenty wild rock behind that lagging, and you never know how much pressure. Sometimes all is roses, like tonight, and sometimes you fight like hell to hold it. Most tunnel-rats never quit though, till they're too old or get drug out and are put in a box."

NEXT trip we took in a load of ninety pound rails, bent in a quarter circle at one end. We cut a few of the vertical wall-timbers just above the concrete, using air-motors and bits, and dropped them out, then bored the lagging boards from floor to ceiling and pulled them out. Taking them out across the ceiling is ticklish business, with the air full of rock most of the time.

We raised the rails with blocks and tackle, set the straight ends into pockets, jack-hammered in the concrete, and fastened the curved ends together, at the top, with angle bars and bolts. Each rail set took the place of two wall-timbers and an arch set.

"All right, you guys," ordered Big John. "Four of you stull this pair up. The rest of you get ready and raise another set."

Curley and I took one side, another old head and his helper took the other. After we'd barred the rails into place the proper distance from the tunnel center, we drove in heavy wood struts, between rail and rock wall, wherever we could find a solid spot.

This set all snug, we moved on to the next. Our bunch did nothing but cut and drive stulls for a week. We turned this section over to the concrete crew on schedule and opened up another one. Curley was a lot of help by this time; he'd make a good man.

The crew had a good many spots in the dog-house, out in the yards, waiting for trains to clear. Somebody was always kidding, telling wild stories, or playing practical jokes. Why not? Big John was a good shifter, none better. Everything was going smooth as silk and we all felt fine.

Then—one of the ground crew stood too close after the All Clear signal. A segment hit him and broke his leg. Two shifts later, a rock from the ceiling struck me on the back of the head. I had on a heavy cap but it cut a gash two inches long, clean to my skull.

Next night the fan failed. Monoxide. They dragged four of the top crew out and used artificial respiration. Curley and me were in that bunch. We still felt punk from the gassing when a fire broke out in a dry section. All hands rolled out of bed and raced in to help the day crew.

She was going good when we got there; lot of timber and rock already down. We pulled down a lot more before we got the fire out. Hole choked—tons of timber and muck to move. Loose rock to scale. Cover the worst places with new timber. Two hours sleep in forty. Three men hurt. New men got jittery like a bunch of coeds. The old heads went around looking glum. A jinx had the outfit.

We opened up a wild section; disintegrated granite, wet and mixed with flour mica. In size it ranged from dust to chunks that'd weigh a hundred pounds. One of the greenies hit the wrong place with a scaling bar, and the whole north wall caved in on us. Ever seen a bin piled full of mine-run coal? Knock a side out of the bin and you'd get a picture of how this rock acted. Just a young landslide.

Everybody got clear but Curley. We were cutting concrete for a rail set, and I'd sent him after a sharper drill. He got caught, standing up, between two wall timbers. The timbers held most of the weight off him, but when we dug him out he had rocks in his hip pockets.

The day crew and us spent six hours ramming all the timber we could lay hands on into that north wall. Then another four hours, with two trains waiting at each end of the tunnel and all the brass-hats sore, cleaning up the muck and

hauling it outside to the dump. After that we let the day shift have it and went out to eat.

I strolled from the cook-shack over to the bunkhouse. Man! Was I tired. I sure wouldn't need any sleeping powders today. Curley sat on the edge of my bunk with his head in his hands.

"'Smatter kid?" I asked. "Slide didn't hurt you, did it?"

He just grunted, "Hunh-uh."

"Well, come on, spill it. What's bitin' you?" I was gettin' so I liked the kid fine. He raised his head. He was kinda white around the gills. I'd seen the symptoms before. "Job's got your goat, huh?"

"Yeah," he said, "you guessed it. I never run out on a job in my life, but I'm draggin' up now. This underground work's too dangerous for me. I got a letter the other day," he went on, "from my old boss. Whyn't you drag up and go with me? I could get you on as my relief driver, easy. You'd be a regular driver in no time."

"Thanks, Curley," I said. "Been at this too long to quit now. You're doin' right though. No tunnel stiff ever had any luck workin' a job he's scared of. Me, I figure when your number's up, it's up. If you're gonna get it . . ."

Curley took out, and I started breakin' in another helper. I kinda hated to see the kid go, he was gettin' good. Well—you never know in this game. You work with a guy a while, get to like him, and he drifts. Chances are you never see him again. No. You never know . . .

Things went pretty good for a while. Seemed like the jinx was lifted. Then . . . One day, maybe three, four weeks after Curley left, I picked up a paper. Headlines smacked me in the face: *MOTORIZED TRAIN SMASHES TRUCK—Relief Driver Killed.*

I read on down a ways. *Regular driver slightly injured,* it said. A fine business! Curley quit to take a safe job! Lord, how I'd like to razz him for a few minutes. Sure—the regular driver was Curley.

WEEK after week, month after month, the work went slick as a greased pig. Drop timber, set rails, stull up, and get out of the way. The concrete crew was on our tails every minute.

Section after section showed white cement walls for a day or two, turned gray, then black from smoke and soot. At this rate we'd be through in another year. Then, the jinx hit us again.

A spreader block fell from the ceiling, slammed across a man's shoulders. We took him out. One arm hung limp, cold sweat dripped from his chin, his face was white and drawn. Next, we left on short time, batted out through the portal, split a frozen switch-frog, and piled half the outfit on top of two men.

One we dug out with a crushed skull. He was dead and I wished to God the other was, too. He'll never walk again. What the hell will he get out of life? Somebody'll look after him hand and foot from now on while he lies there and waits to croak. Nice, ain't it?

Some wise guy with an education gave us a bum steer on section 13, up near the center of the hole. Us old-timers knew we shouldn't take out so much timber before we set rails. The gang sent me to Big John with a protest. He pulled his work order on me and I read it to 'em. We grumbled, but we followed orders. Result: cave-in; three men caught; two killed.

Our crew couldn't trust the Office any more. Morale? You just remembered we had some, once. Half the newer men walked out in a body, the old heads went around with their dispositions stuck out a foot. Say one word and you got cussed for three generations both ways. Lifelong friends fought all over the place about nothing at all.

I began to think maybe Curley'd been right. Then I'd say to myself, "Hank, you damn fool, there's nothing you can do. If it ain't your time, you'll be O.K. . . . 'Course, if your number's up . . ."

It don't do a guy any good to think too much about gettin' all mashed and mangled, two miles underground from a sawbones and a hundred miles from a hospital.

Rumors began to trickle in over the grapevine. One day I heard one guy say to another, "Hear we're due for a shake-up. Gonna get a new superintendent."

"Anybody I know?"

"Don't think so. Some stiff from the Rockport Drainage Tunnel. Seems like he made a name for himself 'bout six

months ago, workin' some wild rock. Been pushin 'a shift over there ever since. Name's Rodgers or Robertson, or something."

Compressor motor cut in and I didn't hear any more. I didn't care. One super more or less don't mean much in my life.

About a week later a call-boy barged into the dog-house. Nobody was sayin' a word. I was wishin' they'd pick me for the last watch with a guy who was waitin' for the hot-seat, so I could get cheered up. The kid yelled at me.

"Hank, the new super's in. Wants you over at his office right now!"

"What the hell?" I began.

"How do I know? I'm just carryin' orders, I ain't givin' 'em."

I got up and strolled across the yards. If I got there today or tomorrow, it was all the same to me. I was maybe halfway across the maze of side tracks, eyes on the ground. The new part of the yards was ballasted with muck from the tunnel—rocks of all sizes. I stepped careful so I wouldn't break both legs off just below my ears.

A motor car, two cylinder marine engine wide open, exhaust unmuffled, thundered up the main line. It coughed and backfired as the operator shut off for the curve. I looked up after it had passed me. Steel wheels screamed on curved rails, the motor roared again, and I caught a glimpse of the backs of two men as the car ducked into the west end of the big hole.

The damn fools! Where'd they think they were going? Number Two, westbound passenger, was due any minute. They had a swell chance to meet her head on. Well, I couldn't be bothered. They hired men with brains to figure train schedules. I strolled on.

Big John met me on the run, "Snap out of it, Hank!" he yelled. "Rout the gang out. Two timber sets're hangin' in section ten." (Section ten was two thirds of the way through, almost four miles from us). "The new super was on that car. He's racin' to flag Number Two. Let's hope he makes it."

I forgot about broken legs. Over my shoulder I called, as I ran for the dog-house, "Want to take the whole outfit?"

"No!" he shouted back. "Cut it behind the second flat. Take just the front half."

I beat him to the compressor, pulled the whistle cord and tied it down. I had two motors popping before the gang started to swarm on the cars.

I grabbed the throttle and shift lever of the front motor, a four cylinder job with a tower built on its frame. Big John climbed in front of me, gave me the high-ball, and the last man out caught us on the fly. Somebody untied the whistle cord, the scream died and we hit the west portal with a roar.

The hole was clear of smoke and my headlight beam cut a clear swatch up the track. Concrete walls rushed by us in a shimmering smear and the rough timbered sections looked like a smooth black wall.

MY MOTOR was the speediest of the lot. With the heavy drag on the drawbar, I could feel the front wheels leave the rails every time we hit a rough joint. I'd hold my breath while they were in the air and exhale each time they'd settled back on the rails. If they ever missed, she'd nose into the wall and I'd have the rest of the outfit wrapped around my neck. Big John, his face white, stood in the front corner of the car and waved his flashlight for more speed. I set my teeth and gave her the gun.

Big John threw his flash on a section marker. Number Fourteen; about another quarter mile. Then . . . A locomotive headlight cut the blackness ahead. Its glare hit me full in the eyes and I almost bit my tongue off. Honest, I'd have set the brakes and left her if there'd been any place to go.

Below and to the right of the big light, a flash waved a slow signal. If he'd given me a "washout" instead, I think I'da died without waitin' for the crash. I set my brakes easy so she wouldn't buckle up behind me and we ground to a stop.

Just ahead of us hung the timber sets and beyond, backed up by a string of coaches, the big engine throbbed and grumbled. The super hadn't stopped her any too soon.

Everybody hit the ground except the motorcar operators and compressor man. Big John waved me topside for a look. I released my brakes so the other motor

(Continued on page 146)

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN MEOLA

1:54 AND A FRACTION

By EUSTACE COCKRELL

"Oh, you lovely!" Ben screamed, and the big horse swerved to the side, crashing through the brush.

BEN BRUSH BERIGAN was named for a horse. He knew horses thoroughly and understood them. He even looked like one. But he was dishonest—an unhorsely attribute. And while he smelled always of the stable, he also usually smelled of alcohol.

He had no daughter, fair or otherwise. He had no poor but honest father. In fact his old man had been killed trying to keep a steeple-chaser from winning back in 1908 and Ben couldn't even remember him. No woman had ever loved him. He had been born bow-legged and bow-brained. He'd been a jockey, a trainer, a tout, a swipe.

But he loved horses. He had loved thoroughbreds all his life and now he didn't. He was drunk in a Tijuana bar realizing the flat racers thrilled him not.

He'd seen the harness races at Santa Anita. He'd gone there one day in the spring. At first Ben watched the races, and they seemed awful slow. Selling platers will run a mile in 1:38 with a poor jockey up, while a consistent two minute trotter makes legend.

But along about the fourth race they got to getting to him. They looked funny to him, the horses; their conformation was all wrong, and they did look kind of jug-headed. But they were horses, with all the aforementioned idiosyncrasies, and some were game and some were not, some came from behind and some liked it out in front. Some broke into a gallop and fluffed away their chances.

He went down to the paddock, to the stables sniffing the good acid smells, snooping among the swipes and drivers. He heard a lot of jargon that didn't make sense to him. "In the hole" and "hopples" and "the brush" and "balancing hooves," and all manner of other terms that were Greek to him. But he caught on fast and the crowd out there didn't know any more than he did that day and he bet two dollars of his own money on a monstrous overlay in the seventh and it came back 58.80.

And the races themselves got to him. The drivers, who often had bred, broke, trained and owned the horses that they crouched behind. They were different from the jockeys. Lots of them old men, with skills profound and polished from fifty years of driving.

He learned about the great blood lines. He saw the incomparable Greyhound trot grandly up and down the stretch on exhibition. Snow white then, but still stepping twenty-seven feet a stride, drumming his hooves like thunder, spurning the ground. He talked to men who'd seen Dan Patch. He learned the difference between a pacer and a trotter; that a trotter grabs space with his right hind foot and his left front foot and vice versa with each stride and a pacer swings both feet on the same side at the same time. He learned a lot, did Ben Brush and he won 58.80. It looked from where he stood like every day was Christmas.

But of course it didn't last. He tried to play them on the square, with his own money, for awhile, and for awhile he did all right. Then things started going wrong. His horses broke and galloped. They dwelt at the post. He bet on horses that weren't schooled at the new moving barrier and sometimes sat down in their drivers' laps when the wire mesh flew up. He chunked it in on one horse where the bicycle-wheeled sulky developed a flat tire.

DESPERATE, he went to Tijuana, below the border for the Sunday card and it was very strange. The races left him flat. There was no kick to them. The trotters and the pacers, in a few short days, had extracted all the savor from the running horses. He hustled no tips, he touted no tourists. He didn't even stay for the last race but nudged his ancient car into the town and morosely dangled from a bar and laved his larynx with tequila. He was an old man, and broken.

When he was devoid of money and credit, he staggered forth and sought the curb, found it, fell into the gutter, arose and climbed into his ancient motor. Closing one rheumy eye to prevent all objects from being twins, he made the border, got across and weaved into San Diego. From there he sputtered gropingly forth onto a road. He knew not where it led but it was lonely and suited him just fine.

Darkness came upon him and he switched on his lights, giving his vehicle, from the front, the appearance of two men carrying lanterns. He clanked through the darkness and the road got worse, more lonely. He saw signs that told him to watch for livestock as he was in open range.

His eyeballs burned and his head throbbed. Much cheap tequila sloshed below his midriff. He gripped the wheel of his car and pulled the dashboard accelerator clear out. He placed his feet up like they were in the stirrups of a sulky and screamed obscenities at ghostly drivers holding him "in the hole."

Then he heard the drumming hooves! So real they were, from ahead of him, that in his delirium he screamed a name

for his tremors. "Hup, El Suprema! Lay down, baby, trot!"

And through the dusty windshield he saw El Suprema trotting!

The matted tail was flying, the big scarred haunches flexed with mighty muscles. The drumming of the hooves came up in machine gun thunder even above the noise of the oblong pistons in Ben Brush's car.

And Ben Brush, the horseman, in his extremity, noticed that the big stallion there before him was a trotter, not a pacer.

One foot Ben had up on the windshield beside the left door hinge. His right foot fitted in the hole which once had had a door and been a glove compartment. The wheel gripped in his hands were reins. He was hand driving—no whip for him, double wraps and a big stallion drumming down the stretch for the big end of fifty grand.

"Hup, El Suprema, run over 'em, honey!"

It may be significant that the words *El Suprema* appear on some tequila bottles. It also may be significant that Ben Brush Berigan felt no incongruity in looking down at the dashboard of his car and scanning the speedometer. He'd even clock a dream.

"Ho, baby, darling, sweetheart. . .!" He was five feet behind the big horse now. The gravel flew back against the radiator with a clatter but the drumming hooves were as rhythmic as before. Trotting, never breaking to a gallop, the big, unshod hooves came up, and down, piston-like, drumming like a thousand quail in flight.

"Hup, Elllllll Suprema!" Here was the one would lay it on. Lay it down, fight it down the stretch, never break. Never break. "Oh, my darling!" Ben howled.

About six furlongs on the little numbers that measured distance. The hand on the speedometer hovered over and under 30.

And the big black horse picked them up and laid them down. The matted tail stood out, the ears pricked forward.

The mile. Still around thirty miles per hour. A two-minute mile! "Oh, you lovely!" Ben screamed, and the big horse swerved to the side, up a hill through brush, crashing.

Unhesitatingly Ben swung his car, a sulky now, coming into the stretch at Santa Anita. Out of the hole now, going wide, looking the front runner in the eye.

"Give me room, you flannel-mouthed bastard!" Ben Brush screamed. But the big oak moved not an inch.

IN THE gray dawn, Ben Brush Berigan regained consciousness. His head ached from the impact against the windshield, and there were odd blobs of dried blood there. His chest hurt from its blow against the wheel. His stomach was raw from much tequila lately consumed. His eyeballs felt like cinders that were also in his mouth.

He spat one out and saw that on the ground it more closely resembled a tooth. He grinned wryly. He remembered his dream.

He climbed painfully from the car and looked at it. In some ways it resembled an accordion. It in no way resembled a racing sulky.

He heard a trickle of water beside the road and staggered gratefully in its direction. Carefully he bent down to drink, to wash his face. And unseeing, he finally saw it, his nose was almost in it.

It was a hoofprint!

He stood up, without drinking, trembling. He walked back, looking at the tracks. He walked to the road, walked up the road, following backwards, the tracks. He felt a sweat upon him.

He sat and rested and then got up and shakily stepped off the stride. It was twenty-seven feet.

The same as Greyhound's.

Greyhound, the greatest trotter that ever lived. Greyhound 1:55¼. A legend while he lived.

Ben Brush sat down and let unchecked tears trickle from his bloodshot, rheumy eyes down the seared furrows of his cheeks. Ben Brush had found his Holy Grail. He started walking up the road.

He learned some things, though he didn't care about them much. The Indians had chased the horse half-heartedly, finally tried to shoot him; he lured away their mares.

The white men had tried to catch him, because he trotted so and never broke. They thought he had been in a train down south, many years ago—or his sire

and dam—the train was wrecked—the ones that weren't killed, went wild.

He'd go through chaparral, plunging, that would give pause to a small dog. He knew the country. He used the high mountain mesas, unfenced. He was scarred badly, though apparently sound. Ben Brush questioned them adroitly, all his devious dishonesty coming into play.

He sold the wreck of his car, bought a blanket and an axe, food. He fought the chaparral and walked through the high mesas.

He could catch the horse. He knew horses, could think like a horse. A wild ornery horse made it easier.

In a month of observation he started his corral. It was a brush and log pen, wide fanning guides to the narrow, quick closing gate.

It was designed to hold an elephant, or catch a fox. The gate that closed it could be tripped down on the instant. No horse could jump it. It was as strong as four-inch green oak. As cleverly concealed as a leaf among the leaves.

Ben mixed his lie with love. He stole an amorous mare and staked her in the pen. Then he waited.

It had taken him a month to learn where to build the corral. Two months to build it. He would wait a week, downwind.

But the big stallion came fearlessly and soon. Trumpeting his way, crashing bold in his own terrain.

Ben tripped the gate. Eventually he got the mare out and turned her loose.

Then he went into the pen. Little, wizened, unwashed, ripe with crusted sweat and dirt. But unafraid. He went into the pen.

He stayed there almost all the time for a month. He slept there. A little man the big stallion could crush with one hoof.

In the daytime he walked the inside circle as the big horse walked the barrier. And he talked to El Suprema, called him by name and told him of the world, the other horses, the crowds, the excitement down the stretch, of fifty thousand dollars. He talked of a mile in 1:55.

He talked to him a month, put his hand upon his neck, one time, dodged the flailing hooves and never raised his voice.

He carted in stolen forage on his back. He got the rope on him the sixth week of captivity.

In another week he had the hackamore on him. In another month El Suprema came to be curried, learned the delights of the sly brush down the throat.

Before the rains came, he had him broken to the heavy cart.

He found his Holy Grail and now he would drink from it. Deeply.

But first something for the nerves, the frazzled nerves long tense with all the guile and courage this old man had when he was in association with a horse.

A bottle of tequila?

Not yet. He had forgotten something. El Suprema must be shod.

Ben Brush fashioned the plates himself and tacked them on. The big stallion leaned on him and sprained his back.

But he was shod.

Now the tequila?

Yes, now the tequila.

And dreaming of money, singing soft obscene songs, Ben Brush started for Los Angeles.

When he returned, the dawn was working over the high mesa and Ben Brush drove a car and behind it was a horse trailer. On the top of the car was strapped a sulky.

SANTA ANITA was hard-packed, readied for the Harness Races that would open there soon. He bedded there, aided by chicanery and bribery. He threw the harness on the big horse the next morning and hitched him to the sulky.

The sun worked over Old Baldy in the distance but the big horse looked to the south and whinnied, and eyed the empty stands with doubt.

Ben checked his stop-watch and turned the big horse, talking to him. He breezed him a slow mile. He cooled him out a little and let him move a mile. He let him turn five furlongs and cooled him good and then he took him out.

He brought him up the stretch, clicking his watch as he hit the judges' stand and asked the horse in a high yell like the starter: "Now go!"

There had never been anything like it. No, never.

Drumming like a thousand grouse, clean shod hooves, roaring out a beat and stride not ever seen before.

(Continued on page 145)

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

SHORT course in French Foreign Legion history.

Query:—Can you tell me when the Foreign Legion was formed and what campaigns and wars it has served in?

—George Weideman,
Provolt, Ore.

Reply by Georges Surdez:—The French Foreign Legion was created by the Law of the 9th March 1831, to absorb the Foreign Regiments in the Royal Guard at the passing of the Bourbon dynasty. It served first in Algeria, during the conquest, then everywhere the French flag was carried, with a period in Spanish service during the 1st Carlist War 1835-39. The Legion served in the Crimea, in Italy, in Mexico 1863-67, in France during the Franco-Prussian War 1870-71, in Tonkin, Dahomey, Madagascar, Sudan, Tunisia, China, Formosa, Sahara, in France during World War I, in Morocco, Mauritania, at the Dardanelles in 1915 etc. World War II: There were regiments of the Foreign Legion proper and a larger number of 'Regiments of Foreign Volunteers,' volumes would be needed to extricate the precise distinction. The Foreign Legion was active on the Maginot Line, supplied a half-brigade to the Norway expedition—the outfit that retook Narvik for a space against the crack Nazi parachutists—elements of the Legion fought in Brittany during the crackup of '40, went across to England, were shipped to West Africa, circled the Cape to participate in the campaigns that retook Abyssinia and Eritrea—other and smaller units crossed the Sahara with Leclerc—the Legion units fought on both sides in Syria, a few companies were on the beaches of Morocco and Algeria when the Americans landed and put up a token fight until the cease-fire order came, Legion units fought with the British 8th Army from Egypt to Tunis, Legion units landed first in Corsica, Legion units were with the French Army in Italy, in France, into Germany. This is, of course, very sketchy—there are books hundreds of pages long for all the various campaigns.

ELECTRIC fence.

Query:—I am told that fencing competitions are now run by electricity. Would you please confirm this and explain how it is done?

—Chester H. Miller,
Tuck-away Farm,
Chalfont, Penna.

Reply by Col. Jean V. Grombach:—Prior to the war, experimentations were being conducted for the development of electical devices to conduct and judge fencing competitions in foil and sabre. All competitions, however, in epee or dueling sword have for many years been exclusively conducted and judged by electricity. For the past few years all national championships in epee in the United States have also required the electrical system.

The explanation of the perfect or European electrical system of conducting and judging epee bouts is simple enough. The point d'arret or the barbed point of the dueling sword is a plunger which as a result of an actual touch delivered with sufficient force makes an electrical contact. Wires fixed in the groove of the triangular shaped blade lead to a three-way female plug inside the bell guard. The male plug to fit this is attached to a wire which is run inside the fencer's sleeve and around and out the bottom and rear of his fencing jacket where there is another plug with a clip. When a fencer goes on the strip to fence, this rear plug is connected with a wire attached to a drum at his end of the strip. The drum will play out wire but if the fencer retreats toward his end of the strip, the drum will roll up the slack so that the fencer's movement forward or backward is in no way

handicapped or impeded. Each fencer is similarly wired in, the third circuit being neutral to take care of the opponent's bell guard and the floor so that touches made on the floor or the opponent's guard will not register. All other hits will ring a bell on the director's box, usually placed on a table alongside the center of the strip. This box has two lights and only one of these lights up denoting the winner or fencer who scored his touch first. The machine registers the slightest difference in time so that only very rarely are there double touches—namely touches actually made at the same split second or simultaneously, in which case both lights light and according to the rules, both men lose since in a real combat both men would be hit by cold steel at precisely the same time.

In the United States, neither the machines nor the officials are as advanced in the art of electrical fencing. The neutral circuit here only takes care of the opponent's guard and two judges are required to watch and "invalidate" floor touches which register by bell and light. In Europe they use a metal strip of floor. In addition, in the United States considerable trouble and delay is occasioned by the breakdown of the electrical apparatus thereby converting some meets into contests comparable to six day bicycle races. This will be corrected when the Amateur Fencers League of America solves the problem of retaining a special experienced electrician to service all electrical meets.

THE versatile quail.

Query:—What can you tell me of the habits of the quail?

—R. Mullins,
Rt. 2, Box 225,
Paragould, Ark.

Reply by Davis Quinn:—The quail *(Colinus virginianus)* is one of our most interesting upland game birds, although personally I could never see why it should be a game bird, it is so small, not much more meat than a robin. It is not much harder to shoot than a robin, unfortunately, and for this reason has all but been exterminated over much of its former range. Used to be plentiful around this part of New York but has practically disappeared. A tragedy, because it is a lovely, interesting bird and its call one of the sweetest to be heard. You know, "Bob-white!"

Quail breed usually about farm land, in or near fields of grass or grain or in undergrowth. Nest is well concealed (often a triumph to find one!) on ground, often along bush-bordered fences, by roadside or in edge of woods. Hidden in thick tufts of grass and sometimes under bushes, often arched over on top with grasses, well hollowed out and lined chiefly with straw, grass or chips of bark. Sometimes a covered or vaulted passage is made leading into the nest.

Eggs are pure white and number about ten to seventeen, although up to 42 have been counted in a single nest (perhaps the product of more than one female). In confinement a female quail has laid 124 eggs in one season. Incubation done chiefly by female and takes about 24 days. Eggs can be hatched under a bantam hen. Young frisky and ready to run and hide as soon as they break through the shell. If danger threatens, young suddenly lie still, may even be trod upon and are of course very hard to see as they blend with the grasses, etc., they are in, meanwhile parent pretends broken wing or lameness (a device so well known in the ruffed grouse) in attempt to lead enemy off.

This bird has strange ability to pack many eggs in the nest, all pointed downward. If the eggs are disturbed, no human hand is skilful enough to replace same number of eggs in as small a space as they were; rather remarkable, since human fingers, one would think, should be handier to manipulate eggs than the equipment a small bob-white has.

This bird eats chiefly such vegetal foods as acorns, beechnuts, buckwheat, corn, millet, wheat. It also eats many many weed seeds, which fact plus its appetite for harmful insects in season, makes the quail a very beneficial species economically.

It should be taken off the list of game birds in all states (states having well managed conservation departments have already done this) and put permanently on the protected list. Otherwise this splendid species will grow even more scarce till it becomes extinct.

It is said, when quail is hunted by dogs, it can hold its scent from the dogs by sitting close to the ground and drawing the feathers in close to cover the body. This is not a scientific confirmed fact but rather a belief, possibly true, indulged by experienced sportsmen.

PLEASANT living conditions in British East Africa—but don't expect to make your fortune there overnight!

Query:—I would greatly appreciate any information you could give me on Kenya, Tanganyika or Uganda as to the climate, living conditions, cost of living, and especially as to the advisability of either visiting or settling in any of those countries at the present time. I would also like to know if any colleges or similar institutions of higher learning are located in any of those countries.

—A. H. Rogers
1027 Clinton Street
Carthage, Missouri

Reply by Gordon MacCreagh:—Generally speaking, climate and living conditions—in British East Africa—are as good or better than in most parts of the U.S.A. This is an unpatriotic statement; but, specifically, climate generally in East Africa is mild. I immediately qualify this by adding, it is mild in such parts of the country as a white man would want to live in; and there is lots of such country.

Living conditions are easier, cheaper, more agreeable, because there is cheap labor and cheap servants are available.

Higher learning? You mean something like an American college? There is nothing anywhere in the world like an American college. There is in Nairobi a "school" that doesn't aspire to our grandiloquent term, college; but it imparts as much solid education as most American colleges. But, you get no frat pins, no emblazoned athletic letters, no Greek alphabet rings; nor can you later drop the modest hint that you are a "college" man. If you want plain honest learning, you can get it in East Africa. If you hope for all the good-time trimmings of our own institutions of the higher learning, they exist nowhere but at home.

Immigration? First of all you must realize that the good old romantic days of going out to Africa with five dollars and a willingness to work and of making a fortune out of those assets, have *gone* forever. You must remember, too, that, post-war England has a vast houseless, jobless, almost hopeless population that is wondering whether chances might not be better in the "colonies." Perfectly naturally, then, the British subject is going to get the preference in everything over all foreigners. And don't ever forget that amongst these seekers for a new life there will be plenty of people with the willingness to work and all sorts of technical knowledges besides. A foreign immigrant, therefore, won't be stepping into a fair and open field with fortune lying in heaps at the other end.

If you have some capital—something running into the ten or fifteen thousand dollars—of course the chances will be on your side, because the average new British immigrant won't have anything like that much money. But I must warn you, without a sizeable stake to start on, you will be handicapped as a foreigner.

Conditions of immigration are being revised to suit current post-war demands. For the latest official information write to,

His Majesty's East African Dependencies,
London, England.

GRAND BANKS cod *vs.* Davidson, Sannak and Shumagin.

Query:—I read an article in *Collier's* recently relating how cod fishing out of Boston and Gloucester was almost a thing of the past and when I read this sad story and thought of the many fine trawlers and draggers no longer able, according to this article, to get a full load of Cod from the Georges Banks, I wondered why someone didn't try eastern methods of cod fishing in Alaskan waters, particularly along the Aleutians and in Bristol Bay. So I wrote to our Fish and Wild Life Service and found that comparatively few cod fish were caught annually in these waters and that all were caught on hand lines. I also learned that there were no regulations against the use of trawlers or draggers.

There used to be a cod fishing station at West Anchor Cove, Unimak Island but it was shut down prior to my visit there in 1913, why I never was able to find out.

I am therefore writing to ask what you know about this subject and whether, in your opinion, commercial cod fishing would be profitable along the Aleutians or in Bristol Bay, if conducted as it is in New England? It seems to me that it would be if there are fish enough and there ought to be on the Davidson Bank and elsewhere.

I am quite familiar with southwestern Alaska so you can omit information about geography, climate, etc. and confine your remarks, if you will be so good, to reasons for or against the venture I have in mind.

—John Borden,
Spring Lake,
Michigan

Reply by Theodore S. Solomons:—I, too, have read with extreme regret of the diminution of cod fishing on The Banks; and I'm sure the Shades of Rudyard Kipling will feel the same way. But whether or not there are cod enough off the several banks in the Alaskan Pacific—*quien sabe?* Your thought is a mighty live idea, however, and worth determining.

If I were you I would not be content with that answer from the Fish and Wild Life Service (formerly, I believe, the Bureau of Fisheries). They must have all manner of reports and surveys to consult regarding the prevalence of cod off Alaska. Make 'em come through!

Also write The Alaskan Packers, Seattle, the Alaska Bureau, Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Seattle, Wash., The Governor's Office, Juneau, Alaska, and last, but perhaps not least, Victor Shaw, *Ask Adventure* expert (look up his address in the Magazine) and long time resident of coastal Alaska, and who probably has some considerable knowledge on this subject. He lived among the salmon trawlers of Southeastern Alaska for some time, I know. Mention my name for extra special attention.

Some of these references will undoubtedly give you specific sources of information unknown to me, for this is the first time in my thirty years on this job that anything like this question has been put to me.

And as one good turn deserves another, if you get the dope would you mind advising me.

Additional reply by Victor Shaw:—Yes, I lived in Alaska over a dozen years, and I'll try to give you the data you require. Being from Boston, I read the article you mention with keen interest; but, I understand there are new rich banks found not so far as the Grand Banks, and if the Grand isn't fished much it will certainly come back.

In re the north Pacific cod fisheries: you must realize that Bering cod fisheries were officially established in 1882, and since then have been fished practically continuously, although always in a very small way. Locally the fishing was by individuals or partners, with a few small companies also. The main Bering Sea fleet has been from the West Coast States, which made usually but one an-

nual expedition; and both the local Alaska and States fishing boats made comparatively small catches each year, only enough to supply their limited markets. This has been but a tiny fraction of what they could get, as this is as rich a cod field as the Grand Banks ever was no doubt. The north arm of the Japan Current flows southwest along the Aleutian chain and its warm waters bring vast quantities of fish food, so cod are there in countless millions, and have NEVER been depleted, but on the contrary have been far *under*-fished.

The reason for this is simple, *viz:* this cod fishing has always been a constant fight against the long established Atlantic fishing, which always has commanded the entire American market. So the small Alaska fisheries could only supply their local and probably a portion of the market in the Pacific Coast states. This is the real crux of the matter. Instead of a fast motorized run to market, as in the Atlantic area, the Alaska catch is salted down in the boats' holds and thus taken to their limited and far distant market. The shore stations, like the one you've mentioned on Unimak Island, and there are some others, are chiefly operated as winter fisheries. The chief nearby banks are the Davidson you mentioned, also the Sannak Banks—some 50 miles southeast of False Pass, and the Shumagin Banks about 100 miles almost due south of Stepovak Bay and just south of the Shumagin Islands group. These banks range in depth from 20 to nearly 100 fathoms and swarm with cod, of the same type as the Atlantic cod (Gadus galarias), and they are all caught with trawls.

I've never heard that an "otter" trawl, or a "beam" trawl has ever been used in Bering Sea or along the Aleutian chain. These are what I imagine you mean by a "dragger." That is a British trawl and is used always in European cod fishing. The beam-trawl drags on the bottom and is used only for flounder, sole, and other bottom fish. The "otter" is also an immense net, but this type is supported under each side by an "otter board" shaped like a sled which holds the net *up* off the bottom. The beam trawl is used along the coast of Southeast Alaska to catch shrimp only.

In re the volume of cod taken annually: in 1925 it totalled about 12 million pounds, but in 1937 the entire catch was valued at only $32,000. At present, the annual catch averages around 10 million pounds. Comparing this with the yearly Atlantic catch of $3,500,000 it seems piffling.

This outlines the north Pacific fisheries of cod from its start to the present time, although I've no data on it since Pearl Harbor. I think you'd find all the fish you care to take on the banks mentioned; but it will require a deep purse to begin with, and you'll first have to find your market and the volume required to supply it. Your ship must be the stoutest too, as you know the tough weather along the Aleutians.

In closing, I want to mention another angle, which has always been wide open and so far as I know has never been exploited in any way. You've perhaps heard about the fairly new (before Dec. 7, '41) industry of fishing for shark livers? And the high prices paid for them? Well, all the coast of S. E. Alaska swarms with dogfish of all sizes, to the extent that you can't fish for rock cod without catching these dogfish. It is a fact that the coves and bays are plumb lousy with them, and they're easily and very cheaply caught with a stout purse-net. Their livers are big and I think they bring from 50c or 75c up to $1 a lb. The rest of the fish makes the finest kind of oil also, and the residue can be sold to any of the numerous fertilizer plants along the Alaska coast. The initial cost for installation will be merely your boat of about 45-50 feet, and a few purse nets, with a crew to handle. And you have fairly good weather along that southeast coast, with safe harbors anywhere for a quick blow.

I'm sure it will repay you to look into this thing, as there is a limitless supply of dogfish actually, and as they run in immense big schools they're easily taken in millions. Nobody, I think, has ever considered this, when the dogfish are so numerous as to constitute a *pest!* And, of course there's no law covering them in any way whatever. Also, the market is wide open, so far as I know.

By the way, we have another variety of cod throughout the Alaska coastal areas: the "black cod." Ever hear of him? Well, he's so tasty that many prefer him to the white.

Note *this* also: the New England Fish Company has packing plants working the year-around from Ketchikan—the "First City," on up the coast in most all coast towns up to Cordova and Valdez and Seward; and they advertise to "buy any type of edible sea fish in any quantity, any time." So, if you want to tackle the northern cod fishing on a small scale, it is fairly certain you could market all your catch with this firm.

IT IS always with the deepest regret that we report the passing of one of *Adventure's* Old Guard contributors. The query on Alaskan cod fishing on the preceding page is the last which will be answered by Theodore S. Solomons who started writing for our magazine more than thirty years ago, almost as soon as the *Ask Adventure* department itself was started.

Mr. Solomons died May 26th and we shall all miss him greatly. A genial, friendly, likeable man, his interesting and informative replies to readers who queried him about the vast frontier territory he knew and loved so well were, down through the years, one of the brightest features of the department. His niche in *Ask Adventure* will be a far from easy one to fill.

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

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Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

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SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure.*

Auto Racing—WILLIAM CAMPBELL GAULT, c/o *Adventure.*

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure.*

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Matawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Boxing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure.*

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th, N. Y. C.

Dogs—FREEMAN LLOYD, care of *Adventure.*

Fencing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure.*

Fishing: *Fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait casting outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W. 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, care of *Adventure.*

Fly and Bait Casting Tournament—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Hiking—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, c/o *Adventure.*

Horses and Horsemanship—JOHN RICHARD YOUNG, 3225 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 8, Wis.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, care of *Adventure.*

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *Foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, 170 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns, American and Foreign: Wing Shooting and Field Trials—ROY S. TINNEY, Chatham. New Jersey.

Skiing—WILLIAM C. CLAPP, The Mountain Book Shop, North Conway, N. H.

Small Boating: *Skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11831 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Swords, Spears, Pole Arms and Armor—MAJOR R. E. GARDNER, care of *Adventure.*

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y., N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, care of *Adventure.*

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, care of U. S. Forest Service, Glenn Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *Reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure.*

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *Anywhere in North America. Prospectors' outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure.*

Ornithology: *Birds, their habits, and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 5 Minerva Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *Outfitting, work in out-of-the way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *Telegraphy, telephony, history, receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD MCNICOL, care of *Adventure*.

Railroads: *In the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling:—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*.

Sunken Treasure: *Treasure ships; deep-sea diving; salvage operations and equipment*—LIEUTENANT HARRY E. RIESENBERG, care of *Adventure*.

Taxidermy—EDWARD B. LANG, 14 N. Burnett St., East Orange, N. J.

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

United States Army—COL. R. G. EMERY, U.S.A., Ret., care of *Adventure*.

United States Marine Corps—MAJ. ROBERT H. RANKIN, U.S.M.C.R., care of *Adventure*.

United States Navy—LIEUT. DURAND KIEFER, U.S.N., Ret., Box 74, Del Mar, Calif.

Merchant Marine—KERMIT W. SALYER, care of *Adventure*.

Military Aviation—O. B. MYERS, care of *Adventure*.

Federal Investigation Activities—*Secret Service, Immigration, Customs, Border Patrol, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure*.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

The French Foreign Legion—GEORGES SURDEZ, care of *Adventure*.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure*.

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure*.

★New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia and Tasmania—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia.

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, No. 1 Flat "Scarborough," 83 Sidney Rd., Manley, N. S. W., Australia.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya—GORDON MACCREAGH, care of *Adventure*. **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure*. **4** *Bechuanaland, Southwest Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, care of *Adventure*. **5** ★*Cape Province, Orange Free State, Natal, Zululand, Transvaal, Rhodesia*—PETER FRANKLIN, Box 1491, Durban Natal. So. Africa.

Asia, Part 1 ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon*—V. B. WINDEL, care of *Adventure*. **4** *Persia, Arabia*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure*. **5** ★*Palestine*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C.

Europe, Part 1 ★*The British Isles*—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., London, W.C. 2, England. **2** *Denmark, Germany, Scandinavia*—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure*.

Central America—ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure*.

South America Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile*—EDGAR YOUNG, care of *Adventure*. **2** ★*Argentina*—ALLISON WILLIAMS BUNKLEY, Calle O'Higgins 2150, Buenos Aires, Argentina. **3** ★*Brazil*—ARTHUR J. BURKS, c/o Alto Tapajos, Rua Gaspar Viana, 18, Belem, Para, Brazil.

West Indies—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, care of *Adventure*.

Iceland—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure*.

Baffinland and Greenland—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure*.

Labrador—WILMOT T. DEBELL, care of *Adventure*.

Mexico, Part 1 *Northern Border States*—J. W. WHITAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. **2** *Quintana Roo, Yucatan, Campeche*—CAPTAIN W. RUSSELL SHEETS, care of *Adventure*. **3** ★ *West Coast beginning with State of Sinaloa. Central and Southern Mexico including Tabasco and Chiapas*—WALLACE MONTGOMERY, Club Americano, Bolivar 31, México, D.F.

Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 89 Laurentide Ave., Quebec, Canada. **2** *Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario*—HARRY M. MOORE, 579 Isabella, Pembroke, Ont., Canada. **4** ★*Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario, National Parks Camping* — A. D. L. ROBINSON, 103 Wembly Rd., Toronto, Ont., Can. **5** ★*Northern Saskatchewan; Indian life and language, hunting, trapping.*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

Western U. S., Part 1 *Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, care of *Adventure*. **3** *New Mexico; Indians, etc.*—H. F. ROBINSON, 1236 N. 8th St., Albuquerque, New Mexico. **4** *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W. EGELSTON, Elks' Home, Elko, Nev. **5** *Idaho and environs*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill. **6** *Arizona, Utah*—C. C. ANDERSON, care of *Arizona Stockman*, Arizona Title Bldg., Phoenix, Ariz. **7** *Texas, Oklahoma*—J. W. WHITAKER, 2093 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Middle Western U. S., Part 2 *Ohio River and Tributaries and Mississippi River*—GEO. A. ZERR, 31 Cannon St., Pittsburgh, 5, Penna. **3** *Lower Mississippi from St. Louis down, Louisiana swamps, St. Francis, Arkansas Bottom*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, P. O. Box 716, Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Adirondacks, New York*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif. **5** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C.; S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*. **6** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

(Continued from page 6)

times in Austria, Italy, and France, attended Blair Academy in Blairstown, N. J., and Yale, from which I graduated without visible honors in 1929. For ten years was a member of the news staff of the Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot,* going through the chairs from writing a woman's shopping column to a short, sharp tenure as day city editor, and several years as police reporter. Took up free-lance fiction writing after an illness in 1938.

My hobbies are cooking, at which I eventually hope to get as good as I think I am; swimming, golf, and any other minor sport promising a maximum of entertainment for a minimum of effort.

The name was briginally O'Donnell, but subsequent to, and due to, a family schism occurring some time between the Civil War and the McKinley administration, my side of the family settled on Donnel while the opposition went off with the "O". I've sold stories to *Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, Liberty, Esquire, American Legion, Argosy,* etc., and have had one book published.

My hostages to fortune are a wife, who likes my stories, Connie, age ten, who likes the "Oz" books, and Donnie, seven, who wants a Scout knife.

And incidentally, speaking of the "Oz" books, *Adventure's* Frank Kramer (see the Chamberlain story which opens this issue) has taken over the illustration job for that famous series since the death of John R. Neill, who first gave such vivid immortality to the fanciful L. Frank Baum characters. Take a look next time you pass a children's book counter at the latest "Oz" volume. We think you'll be interested in the amazing versatility Mr. Kramer displays when he turns to another field for illustration. It's a startling comparison.

ALLISON W. BUNKLEY, who joined our *Ask Adventure* staff a few months ago as expert on Argentina, makes his first appearance in the magazine with the article "Escape to El Dorado" on page 72 instead of—as might be expected—with an answer to an *A. A.* query. There just hasn't been time yet for his Pan-American mail to start accumulating. He writes—

I was born in Manila, P. I. Early months were spent in the Orient and in traveling halfway around the world to my own country. The only "Oriental influence" that remains in later life is an exceptionally strong liking for curry and an ability to eat undue quantities of rice. Upon returning to the United States I entered into the hectic life of a Navy Junior. From the age of one until I entered college I followed the restless Navy career of my father from the rank of Lieutenant Commander to Rear Admiral.

Seldom in one place more than two years, my schooling was so sketchy and limited that I scarcely ever knew what grade I was in or what I was supposed to be studying. Added to this general confusion were three years of duty in South America, spent mostly in Buenos Aires. Here I learned to love the Spanish way of life, learned rudimentary Spanish, and how little North Americans understood of South Americans.

Formal schooling began at Storm King School followed by Princeton where I went in 1942 on a scholarship. Like the rest of my education, Princeton days were anything but normal. War upset the schedule. Left briefly to try and enter the Navy Air Corps, but I was soon discharged because of a broken eardrum. Returned and graduated from Princeton in the Fall of '44 from the School of Public and International Affairs. Taught Spanish and later History, and in '46 received an M.A. in History and a State Department Fellowship to do research in Argentina and complete a biography of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, the great Argentine statesman. I am now the Argentine correspondent for *Newsweek,* and doing articles for other magazines.

Mr. Bunkley's father, Admiral Joel W. Bunkley, U.S.N., Ret. has likewise turned to Grub Street and forsaken the sea to command an L O D (Large Office Desk). He is currently on the editorial board of *American Helicopter,* a magazine devoted to furthering interest in rotary wings. We hope to have an article from him before long.

AND Carl J. Kunz, whose "A Pig for Mauna Loa" is on page 110, sends along the following to footnote his story's background and his own—

Many men like my Father Johan have attempted to discourage that whole-hearted belief in Pele, the Fire Goddess, but your Hawaiian of today believes in her with the same sincerity that his grandfather displayed. Even the *kamaaina,* the old-timer, refers to her with awed respect. To them, she still travels about the island in the form of an old woman, begging and receiving food.

I was fortunate enough to live in a rural section of the Island of Hawaii where some of the ancient beliefs flourish strongly. While so few full-blooded Hawaiians survive, I could count a handful of them as my close friends. They insisted that I drink their fiery *okolehao,* ride their best horses, and hunt wild boar with them. After trying to compete with them, I decided that Pele must have mothered them. When Mauna Loa was preparing to erupt, I almost succumbed to the extent of buying a young pig. Since one of the volcanologists was a friend of mine, I compromised by donating the pig to a neighbor who was about to celebrate the first birthday of a daughter. All that Pele received was just

a whiff of the finest *kalua puaa* ever served on a banana leaf. Someday, if I am ever able to return, I shall make Pele a suitable offering, providing my old Hawaiian friend is around to roast the pig for me.

I was born and raised in western Pennsylvania where the nights were filled with the glare of blast furnaces and open hearths and the roaring of the rolling-mills. As soon as my age permitted, I decided to seek the far horizons of Jack London via a recruiting poster. Since it got me as far as old Camp Meade, Maryland, I decided to start all over again.

Then came nine years with the U. S. Coast Guard, which included intelligence work, genuine sea-going, and some flying. A couple of minor crack-ups plus the responsibility of being a father curbed my urge to be another casualty via the O2U2 (Chance-Vought Corsair) route. I retired to civilian life and weathered the few years until the late fracas began.

The man with the chin whiskers thought that I was a bit too dilapidated for arduous duties—that was back in 1940. However, I was "absorbed" into a hush-hush outfit about three or four weeks before the bullets began flying. They sent me to Hawaii where I promptly became a *kamaaina* via the raw fish, roast dog, and poi route.

Like the true Hawaiian *kamaaina,* I could and would brag about the famous Parker Ranch. My headquarters were within a few miles of the ranch headquarters and I spent much time trying to dodge Parker cattle while driving between Honokaa and Waimea with blackout lights. Someone in Washington must have disliked me, for I was transferred to Kingsville, Texas, right in the heart of the Running-W. To try to tell a Texan about the Parker Ranch was like trying to ride a Brahma bull. I decided that it was easier to brag about the famous King Ranch—the Running-W.

Then came a period with a government agency as an industrial economist. When I heard that agency's dying gasps, I decided that it was time to check out. Sold all my property back in the Hoosier State, bought a trailer, and brought my family and portable to a hill-top in the Simi Hills in California.

Writing, in the past, was sketchy, and sales were practically unknown. Since the break, and after some heart-breaking attempts, I managed to write off my investments in a second-hand portable back in 1935. If the typewriter and I last long enough, I hope to return to Hawaii to make that sacrifice to the old girl, Pele. My ulcers may forbid raw fish and the pickled pork liver, but not even Pele could stop me from stuffing myself with wild boar that has been roasted in a covered stone pit.

And if you don't know about the Parker Ranch—as we didn't—you'll be interested in an article on the Hawaiian cattle-raising industry by Nat McKelvey coming up shortly. Texas ain't got nothin' on T.H.—or not much!

EARL SUTTERFIELD, who gives us "When Your Number's Up" on page 120, shoots along the following—

I didn't exactly have to worry about giving up writing because of Selective Service. Not right away, anyhow, with four kids, all married. No, I began living down in southern Illinois a hell of a long time ago and have done a number of things in an effort to keep the wolf in the back yard and make him behave.

I was in Denver when I was sixteen and started in to learn a trade. Before I was twenty-one had a business of my own in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Kept at it for about two years and then sold shop and bought a marriage license with the proceeds. We went into the Rocky Mountains on a winter hunting and trapping expedition. After four months I had to earn some money and went back to Denver, to work at my trade and became shop foreman.

Then I got the farming bug and followed a "Back to the Soil" movement to northeastern Colorado. I tried that long enough to find out that a farmer isn't independent, he's just a rank individualist.

Two crop failures in four years. That put me on the run for a job, so I became a ditch rider. For ten years I rode the banks of one of the biggest canals in Colorado. First on saddle horses, later with a car, and advised farmers what not to do. (No kidding, a ditch rider has to answer more questions than the Secretary of Agriculture.) During this time I ran a small town hotel, went through an oil boom, got trimmed out of the hotel, and started even again.

Since then I've been a bridge carpenter, set timber in a tunnel through the Continental Divide, and steel in two others, worked structural steel and done rod-busting. (The last, in case you don't know, is setting reinforcing for concrete structures.) Yeah, I've been dumb enough to make most of my living the hard way. (Smart people have someone else do the hard work for them.)

The setting and descriptive matter of "When Your Number's Up" are actual fact, not overdrawn. The characters are composites of men I knew well and have worked with. The whole story is very near to the truth and only embellished slightly.

AND Eustace Cockrell, who rounds out our sextet of recruits this month with "1:54 and a Fraction" on page 126, writes—tongue in cheek, we sadly fear—

I read these pieces about other writers and they always seem to have trained for their writing careers, doing colorful things like being oyster pirates, barroom bouncers or some such. I like oysters on the halfshell and have had some slight contact with barroom bouncers but actually I have never been anything but a writer.

It was like this. After my sketchy schooling

was completed I retired. But my brother Frank and his wife Marian, and my sister Anne and her husband Dick Wormser were all writing stories and books and movies and getting paid for them and as my retirement plan included living with them—alternately—I found myself being subjected to subtle pressures. So I started writing, too.

Looking to the future, however, I married a smart lass and just yesterday her first story is out in print. I will probably retire again.

I'm glad to sell this trotting-horse piece as I've done expensive research on the subject. The Western legend of the pacing mustang gave me the idea.

Incidentally, the longevity of the sulky drivers is astounding. Lots of them have driven for fifty years and the last day I was at the track George Loomis brought his good horse Optimus in an eased up winner. Mr. L is 87.

If it is of interest I've sold quite a mess of stories to a lot of markets including the *Post, Collier's, This Week, American, Blue Book, Argosy,* etc.

"1:54 and a Fraction," my first to *Adventure,* was a pleasure, too.

That's all right, pal. There ain't no iron-clad rule that specifies an author has to have led sixteen safaris through the Kalahari hinterland to sell us a yarn. The story's still the thing and you had one there in the saga of El Suprema. Come again—and welcome!

WE ASKED William Chamberlain—"According to His Lights" on page 8—to catch us up on his wartime activities (he hadn't been with us since "Ould Soldiers Never Die" appeared back in the August '45 issue) and he writes—

There isn't much of anything interesting to add to biographical material already on file with you. At the outbreak of the war I was as cozy and contented as a bug in a rug commanding a gun battery in the 70th Coast Artillery (AA)—one of the first artillery outfits to go overseas. It went with General Patch's task force to New Caledonia early in 1942. But not me, worse luck. I was ordered to the Organization and Training Division (G-3) of the War Department General Staff and there I stayed in spite of everything that I tried to do about it. I became a so-called expert on mobilization, which wasn't hard to do since nobody else knew anything about it anyway, and once having become an expert I guess the powers that be figured that it was easier to hang onto me than it was to try and teach someone else. At any rate my pleas for a command and an assignment overseas fell on deaf ears even though I went to the extreme of transferring to the infantry in the summer of 1944 when any infantryman (even a converted artilleryman) was a gem of purest ray serene and immediately dispatched off to get himself shot. It didn't work.

I did make a trip overseas in the summer of 1944—a staff visit to all of the main theaters. I was in London during the buzz-bombing, saw some of the fighting in Italy, flew the Hump into China and made what was then considered a long (and slightly risky) hop from Ceylon to Australia. The Japs still had Java and Sumatra and since we were flying in an unarmed transport we had to swing well south to stay away from their fighters. Got to see a good bit of New Guinea, Manus and the other Pacific Islands where operations were still going on. Still, it was pretty tame, all in all.

In the summer of 1945 I went back to the Pacific and got in on the tail end of the clean-up of the Philippines—Mindanao and Luzon. Incidentally, I spent some little time with the guerrillas in Mindanao and picked up some swell material for a couple of yarns which I will write as soon as I get the time. Some of the things that they did down there almost defy belief—but they did them. I was headed for Okinawa when, unfortunately, my boss blew into Manila (when I thought he was safely behind a desk fifteen thousand miles away) and scatted me home on the grounds that there was a war going on and I couldn't be vacationing all over the lot. I could argue with him successfully by radio through the medium of just not paying any attention to his messages but I couldn't get away with that face to face so I got back to the States just in time to read about the first A-bomb in a San Francisco newspaper.

In 1945 they promoted me to temporary brigadier general and gave me a medal to assuage my wounded feelings, I guess. In September of last year I was retired for physical disability and now expect to devote my full time to writing if the sheriff doesn't catch up with me first and suggest that I break a few stones as my main occupation.

Nothing interesting to add indeed! But we're happy to hear the general is able to devote full time to his typewriter now and hope to have additional stories from him regularly once more.

JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS sent us a beautifully matched pair of abalone shells in the same mail with his interesting and informative footnote to accompany "Deep-Water Decision" which appears on page 40 this month. The shells are doing yeoman service as ashtrays on our desk—nacre hasn't lost a bit of its sheen—and here's the footnote—

About six months ago I was in the Californian seacoast village of Cambria—south of Big Sur and Monterey and the cliff-hewn San Simeon highway—when I heard of Tomas Delmar Reviea, leader of the abalone fisher-

men between Monterey and Santa Barbara.

I looked up Tom Reviea, and thus began a most valued friendship. Fiction never produced a character much more picturesque and versatile than Reviea. Deeply browned by sun and wind, wearing a knitted seaman's cap, he's medium tall, with twinkling brown eyes and a hearty laugh, and looks about as soft as a steel hull.

He's not only leader of the abalone fishermen, their spokesmen before the legislature at conservation hearings, one of the outstanding California divers, owner of a Cambria abalone processing plant and of abalone boats. This merely scratches the surface of his interests. Rated as an ecologist by two leading marine institutions, he has made important scientific contributions to the knowledge of his specialties, sea urchins and abalone. Likewise an authority on sedimentation, he has been employed by Army engineers building breakwaters and harbors. He's made four marine surveys for the Bureau of Marine Fisheries and other bureaus, and during the war managed the American production of gelidium seaweed to supply this country with agar.

Now it might be well to explain the mollusk which is his main interest. To say that an abalone is a monovalve, one of the same broad mollusca family as octopi and snails, is scarcely helpful. Stated simply, an abalone has a single half-rounded oval shell, which is rough and barnacled outside and mother-of-pearl inside. Enclosed in this shell is the abalone. The side opposite the shell has a black suction surface which clings to rocks as tenaciously as an octopus' suction cups. Of the eight varieties found in California coastal waters, only the *haliotis rufescens,* known as the "Red Abalone" is commercially important and it's found from northen California to Mexico, its ideal environment being underwater rocks or ledges at depths of approximately forty feet. Commercial limits are twenty-foot depths (the shallower water being reserved for sports fishermen), but most abalone are pried loose by abalone divers working at forty- to sixty-foot depths, a lesser number being taken from waters ranging to depths of eighty and even a hundred feet. An eight-inch diameter is the minimum legal size for commercial fishermen, which means a thirteen-year-old abalone. But for conservation laws prohibiting shipment from the state, abalone would undoubtedly rate as a gourmet's dish in eastern cities, as it does in food-conscious San Francisco. Readers with memories of aching jaws caused by improperly prepared and overcooked abalone will doubt this. But if abalone is properly sliced, thoroughly pounded to break down its tough fibers and cooked for but a minute on each side, it can be cut with a fork and its delicate but rich and distinctive flavor will be long remembered.

Abalone boats, usually twenty-six feet long and little better than decked-over lifeboats, are inadequate for the heavy swells along the mid-California coastline; consequently a tenth of the boats are lost yearly. However, only small boats can work between rocks where many abalone are found. The crews consist of a diver, diver's tender and a boat operator. The latter steers from topside the engine house, where he can watch and follow the rising air bubbles as the diver works along the bottom. The boat has the usual diving gear—air-compressor, air-hose, life-line, diving dress and helmet.

Space limitations prevent me from going into any detail about my eventful weeks with the abalone fishermen, but these high points stand out: The day when heavy swells opened a seam in a boat, the pump broke down, and we were sinking for five and a half hours off the sheerwater San Simeon cliffs before the leak was found and sealed with a work glove. . . . Long to be remembered, too, was the day Tom Reviea tried out a 7½-ton amphibious landing craft he'd bought from surplus stores to use as a pick-up boat. He'd waited for a day when the swells were particularly heavy to baptize the "duck" and discover whether it would swamp in the most unfavorable of seas when fishing was possible. It was my good fortune to be with him. Reviea discovered the bilge-control pump before the duck had taken too much water. The duck climbed up onto the beach with only a few grumbling protests after her trial run. . . . Memorable, too, were days yarning with the abalone fishermen in their picturesque camp beside a San Simeon stream, and the long talks evenings with Reviea. . . . Likewise unforgettable were the days on Reviea's boat, watching him dive in seas so heavy that all other boats turned back. Even after coming up after an hour or so below, his face drawn with fatigue from bucking strong currents and the drag of line and hose, he never rested long on the ladder before his habitual good humor would reassert itself and he'd be grinning and joking with the crew.

Reviea knew I was anxious to have a better understanding of an abalone diver's working methods, so one day while he rested, he had his tender and boat operator help me into his diving dress. On the ladder my helmet was screwed on, and then I was lowered through pale green water traced here and there with undulating strands of seaweed. The roar of compressed air entering my helmet was the only sound. It was necessary to swallow and blow, of course, to equalize changing inside and outside pressures as I descended.

Reviea had chosen a particularly beautiful area, a stretch where coastal waters were a veritable garden of riotous color and fissured with crevasses. When I touched bottom, I gave a single jerk on my line and paused for a while to observe the fantasy world thirty feet below. The light, bright yet diffused, reflected from the white walls of the crevasse so that you could clearly see the rainbow sheen of fish that seemed quite unafraid, the vivid red of starfish, the dark purple of great sea urchins that rose better than waist high. Colors changed constantly. The long strands of seaweed reaching far out of view, for example, turned from brown to purple and back

(Continued on page 143)

THE TRAIL AHEAD

It's an exciting and danger-laden way you'll start to travel next month—along the turbulent surface of the Upper Missouri from Sioux City west to Yankton and the mighty flood's junction with the Niobrara . . . . On through the Indian-infested plains, watching for trouble ahead around each bend from the texas of a grasshoppering river packet.

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—is an important contribution to a seldom-tapped segment of American frontier history—and a roaring good yarn to boot . . . . River pirates, crooked Indian agents fomenting rebellion among the tribes, the residue of waterfront thugs who found themselves burned out of Natchez-under-the-Hill and scuttled to safety along the edge of the Black Hills, swaggering packet pilots and their cubs, all the colorful folk who peopled the fringe of the nation in this gripping first installment of a distinguished new three-part serial.

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ON SALE SEPTEMBER 10th

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

I am anxious to contact Lt. Cal Newton, formerly of the 491st Post Battalion, Transportation Corps, formed at Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Penna. Newton attended the Army Administrative Officer Candidate School No. 6 at State College, Mississippi, and is urged to contact Edward B. Ficklen, Statler Hotel, 423 E. 7th St., Los Angeles, 13, Calif.

I am very interested in locating the following buddies of mine. We served in the 26th Regt., First Inf. Div., both in the states and the ETO; in England, Scotland, North Africa, and Sicily, where we were separated. S/Sgt. John Page, about 5′ 7″, 140 lbs., ruddy complexion, reddish brown wavy hair, square features, and about 33 years of age. Page is formerly of Jersey City, N. J. Sgt. George (Big George) Brighindi, 6′ 1″, 200 lbs., olive complexion, black wavy hair, plays guitar. He is from Bridgeport, Conn., about 29. T/Sgt. Arthur (Lippy) Lippman, dark complexion, black thinning wavy hair, about 5′ 6″, slender build, from New York City, is about 32 years old. Any information will be appreciated by Danny Monahan, 354 Water St., Leominster, Mass.

I should like to locate Vernie Baldwin, 35 years old, lived in Live Oak and Jacksonville, Florida, in 1928 and early in the 30's. He is related to John Sterling and is the son of B. O. Baldwin. Please write J. E. Cross, P. O. Box 61, Live Oak, Fla.

I am trying to locate some friends of mine whom I haven't seen since 1938. I don't remember their names, but I met them in the summer of 1936 when they were living in East Bennington, New Hampshire. There were about 12 or 14 in the family. They went to Antrim District School in 1937 and moved away about November of '37. They moved back in 1938 and then moved away again. They may be living in northern N. H. or Vt. The four of them that I knew would be between 14 and 18. If anyone has any information about them, please contact Francis R. DeCapot, 65 Amherst St., Nashua, N. H.

I want to contact Stephen Kolowoski from Chicago who was on the Secretary of Navy's yacht and at the Receiving Station in Washington. Also Joe Viediteh who was on the old Reuben James 245 in 1920—and William Jennings Bryan Guest from St. Louis who was on the old battleship, the New Jersey. Would also like to find William Wischertch from the Naval Magazine in Coco Solo and Naval Air Station along with William Henry Hanna Hurst from New Orleans who was on the old Flusser 289 in 1920. Please write L. W. Fraser, CGM, USN, 16th Fleet Staff, Orange, Texas.

I am very anxious to contact my old buddy, former S/Sgt. Harry Rogers. We served with the 491st Bomb. Group H. He may be in Biloxi, Miss., or Mobile, Ala. I have been trying since October, 1945, to find him and any help you may be able to give me will be appreciated. Please write to George Paraspolo, 627 29th St., San Francisco, Calif.

For some time I have been trying to locate my father, George Franklin Watson. He was last known to be in Cleveland, Ohio. If any one has any information whatsoever about him, please write to G. F. Watson, 695 E. Utica St., Buffalo 11, N. Y.

I am trying to find my buddy, Arthur Von Boot, or Bot. We worked together for the Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania, in Pittsburgh, during the spring of 1902. He was a lineman and was headed for the southwestern gold fields. He knew me only by my nickname, "Si Perkins." Anyone knowing his present whereabouts, please write to H. H. Epler, 2102 Hollingsworth Street, New Kensington, Penna.

I would appreciate any information about Frank and Fred Reed of New Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The last known of Frank, he was still in Pennsylvania and Fred was somewhere on the West Coast. Anyone knowing of either Frank's or Fred's whereabouts, please write to M. M. Mausser, R.F.D. No. 1, Bernard, Iowa.

Will any soldier serving in Company A, 275th Engineers Bn., 75th Division, in Holland during the first part of 1944 who knew Cpl. F/5 Thomas L. Graham or Quentin Rall please write to Mrs. J. E. Graham, Artesia, New Mexico.

I would like to locate Ed La Vergue who was on the *USS Marblehead* at the time of her historic encounter with the Japanese. Please write J. O. Jernigan, 1014 W. Eastland Ave., Nashville, Tenn.

W. H. McCarty, 965 Clinton St., Napa, California wants information of his two brothers, A. W. McCarty, whose nickname is "Buck," and W. F. McCarty, sometimes called "Bill."

Thanks very much for your help in locating my buddy. R. L. Hale, 1720 E. Johns Ave., Decatur, Ill.

[redacted] would like to contact Sgt. [redacted] who was stationed at Fort Ord, California, 1940-1942; 3rd Inf., 7th Div. Please write to ex-Sgt. R. L. Hale, 1720 East Johns, Decatur, Illinois.

(Continued from page 140)

to brown as they swayed in the swift current.

This swift current was a problem as I worked along the crevasse toward deeper water. I dug in cleated shoes, leaning against it, but when I pushed too hard the buoyancy of my dress made me rise a little so that the current had its way. Each turn in the crevasse brought another surpassingly beautiful scene before me—but no legal-sized abalone, because Reviea had previously "worked" the crevasse. You determine size by two perpendicular prongs on your abalone bar, eight inches apart, for if they fit over a shell, the abalone is too small.

Each time the crevasse forked, I chose what appeared to be the easier branch, and I'd passed three or four forks before finding a fair-sized abalone on a vertical wall below a flat shelf. Magnified by my vision plate, it looked as broad as a basketball but the measuring prongs of my bar showed that it was only slightly larger than legal size.

I "missed" the abalone—that is, failed to pry it off at the first attempt—and thereafter had trouble. Four times I tried and failed and then, growing a little giddy, I had to lower my head until it cleared. Laying the rope abalone basket on the shelf, I placed both hands on the bar, found a small crack between shell and rock, inserted the point of the bar and leaned all my weight on it. I was both surprised and relieved when it came free and I could drop it into my basket.

During my half hour below, I encountered none of the hazards that make abalone diving a precarious existence. Abalone divers are sometimes squeezed into their helmets by pressure when their dresses are ripped in deeper water, their life-lines are fouled or air-hoses are cut so that they strangle, they are attacked by octopi, killer whales, Conger eels and angry bull sea lions. Not only do they face these risks, but because they are working on compressed air, bucking currents and clambering over rocks and ledges in heavy diving gear, they endure more severe physical punishment than is required of almost any other job.

And speaking of abalone—how many of you are familiar with the ballad-paean-of praise to the succulent mollusk—excerpts from which crop up in Jack London's "The Valley of the Moon?" We never knew whether there were more verses than he quoted or who authored them. Can anyone send us the whole "poem?"

—K.S.W.

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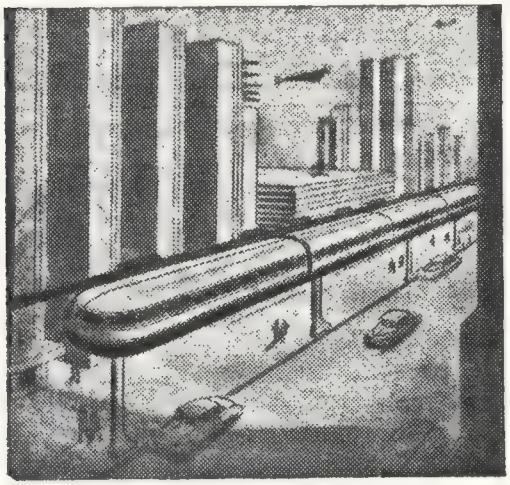

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(Continued from page 59)

in the wagon bed again. "You mean," he said, "that devilish little brat's been risking his life in this deep hole? After I warned him?"

"All summer long," Ransome said. "Could have drownded himself a dozen times."

"Get me out of here!" Jay's papa shouted. "I'll learn that bull-headed little scamp a lesson he won't forget. Hurry and get me out of here!"

Ransome said, "What about Sis and me?"

"Take her, confound it, if you're bound to have her!" Jay's papa roared. "Just get me out of here. I'll learn that boy to listen to his pa. I'll frazzle his little tail till he'll eat standing for a solid month!"

Ransome laughed out loud. "I sure want to see that," he said.

And he took down his catch-rope and pitched it to us.

It wasn't much trouble to locate Jay. We just went along through the opening that the runaway had knocked in the brush till we heard him hollering. We found him trapped under an overturned whiskey barrel with a fallen tree trunk lying across the top, pinning the barrel to the ground. Jay was sure hollering loud. There were some mad wasps trapped under the barrel with him and he didn't even have enough elbow room to fight them off.

Jay's papa shoved the tree trunk aside and tipped over the barrel. Jay stuck his head out and his papa collared him.

"Ransome," Jay's papa said, "would you give me the loan of that rawhide quirt on your saddle?"

Ransome would, and Jay's papa took the quirt and sure did frazzle Jay's tail for him. I mean!

When he was satisfied with the job, Jay's papa turned his baby boy loose and Jay took to the brush, still hollering bloody murder.

"Now, Ransome," Jay's papa said to Ransome, "you know how to handle them little scamps you and Sis is fixing to raise!" And he slapped Ransome on the shoulder and threw back his head and laughed at the top of his voice. Just like the whole thing had been a big joke.

THE END

(Continued from page 130)

Ben Brush knew it in his heart and soul. Knew it in his mind. Knew for sure at six furlongs.

The bicycle tires whined on the smooth hard dirt. The big horse sweated, smelling acrid and clean. "Elllllll Suprema! Ah, honey, baby, go. NOW GO!"

Down the stretch now. Double wraps, feet up in the stirrups, those big haunches between your arms. "Eyiiii!"

El Suprema hit the pole as Ben Brush snapped his watch and eased him off. He looked down, closing one eye, damp with cold sweat, his old heart pounding.

1:54! He couldn't read the fraction.

And El Suprema turned his head and looked at him.

It was a look. The only look ever given Ben Brush that he understood.

El Suprema looked back to the south and whinnied high and sad.

Ben Brush looked at the watch and then he snapped it back to zero and led the horse to the stable. He unharnessed him and rubbed him down. He took his time. . .

The Indians don't shoot at El Suprema any more though he still lures their mares away.

Ben Brush Berigan got six months for stealing a car and horse trailer and it was good for his health, the regular hours. He's the only man who ever lived who ever rode a mile behind a horse in less than 1:55 but he never speaks of it, because he hasn't got the horse to prove it. The horse runs wild back where Ben Brush turned him loose.

THE END

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(Continued from page 125)

could handle it and climbed up to the deck. We were too far away. I couldn't see well enough. I yelled down, "Ease her up under the timber!"

Big John gave a "go ahead slow," but the operator hit her too hard and a corner of the deck caught on the key timber. I had arch segments all over me. Choking, soot filled my lungs. At the same time, the tower folded, a short circuit flamed up and the lights went out. Down through the blackness I plunged and was brought up with a bone jarring crash. A flame like the hinges of hell seared my chest and I tried to push something off me so I could get my breath. No go. I was pinned. Maybe this was it. Well, if my number was up . . .

The locomotive headlight still burned, but it didn't reach me through the wreckage. Hands seized my legs and heaved. The pain got worse and I'd have cussed the hide off somebody if I could have said a word. A flash played over my face and a familiar voice snapped, "Stop it, you fools. You want to pull him in two? Here, get out of the way and let me in there. John! See if there's a doctor on the train!" Who was giving the orders I couldn't figure.

A pair of big shoulders eased in beside me. Breath whistled through straining lungs while he groaned and heaved. The weight lifted and other hands dragged me out into the light. The sawbones looked me over and gave a verdict. "Nothing more serious than a few broken ribs. He'll be all right in a couple of weeks."

A big guy'd had an arm under my head. He heaved a sigh and I looked up into a sooty grinning face. The voice I hadn't been able to place, a voice which now wasn't quite steady said, "Hank, you old goat, you're too tough to kill. When you come back from the hospital, you're taking over this shift. John tells me he wants a gang on the outside."

I began to see daylight as he went on. "A few months ago I crawled out from under a pile of junk. Ten seconds before it had been a perfectly good truck. Right then I got something you told me once. Remember? When your number's up . . ."

Yeah, that's right. The new super was Curley.

THE END

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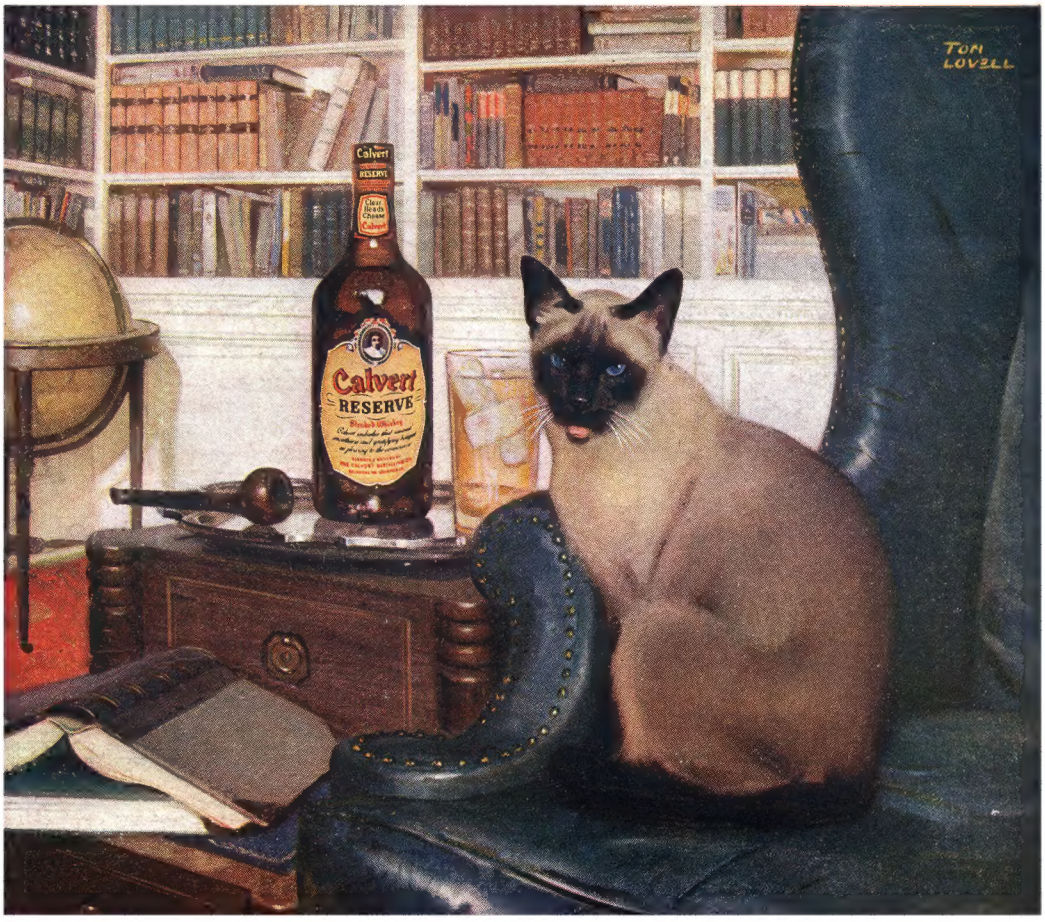

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